THANKSGIVING DAY IN MODERN STORY

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THANKSGIVING DAY IN MODERN STORY

THANKSGIVING DAY IN MODERN STORY

Edited by

MAUD VAN BUREN

and

KATHARINE ISABEL BEMIS

EDITORS OF "CHRISTMAS IN STORYLAND," "CHRISTMAS IN MODERN STORY," AND "MOTHER IN MODERN STORY."

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PREFATORY NOTE

This anthology of Thanksgiving tales is offered in response to the demand each year from libraries, schools, and clubs for stories appropriate for the Thanksgiving season. Since this occasion is so distinctive a family anniversary, the compilers have endeavored to assemble stories of interest both to adult and younger readers without designation.

That this collection of tales, reflecting the true spirit of our national praise- and feast-day, may prove profitable to its readers is the sincere wish of its editors.

CONTENTS

PAGE

A THANKSGIVING TRIANGLE 3
Margaret E. Sangster

SQUIGGLES'S TURKEY 11
Ralph H. Graves

THE THANKSGIVING GUEST 25
Louise Chandler Moulton

PRAIRIE BIRD'S THANKSGIVING 34
Julia D. Peck

THANKSGIVING SNOW-SHOES 50
Ben Ames Williams

MIRANDY ON THANKSGIVING 69
Dorothy Dix

AN OLD-TIME THANKSGIVING 76
M. Eloise Talbot

THE WIDENED HEARTH 91
Fannie Kilbourne

JARLEY'S THANKSGIVING 108
John Kendrick Bangs

THE GRATEFUL LUNELLA 125
Elizabeth Sanxay Holding

"WITH PRAYER AND FASTING" 154
Emery Pottle

CONTENTS

PAGE

BREAKING THE NEWS TO THE FAMILY . . . 172
Frederick L. Collins

A TARDY THANKSGIVING 188
Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

THANKSGIVING AT TODD'S ASYLUM 203
Winthrop Packard

BETTY AND THANKSGIVING 218
Harriet Prescott Spofford

OLD TOM'S THANKSGIVING DINNER 232
Williams Thomas Whitlock

THE NIGHT BEFORE THANKSGIVING 246
Sarah Orne Jewett

JEFF'S THANKSGIVING TURKEY 255
Thomas Travis

JANE MURRAY'S THANKSGIVING 267
Rebecca Harding Davis

THANKSGIVING ON HERRING HILL 282
Julia M. Tenney

EZRA'S THANKSGIVIN' OUT WEST 308
Eugene Field

SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR 321
Mary Mayo Crenshaw

HASHIMURA TOGO'S THANKSGIVING 343
Wallace Irwin

THANKSGIVING DAY IN MODERN STORY

A THANKSGIVING TRIANGLE *

Margaret E. Sangster

They sat at the table—the Thanksgiving table—the woman and the two men who loved her. It was a beautiful table, gay with flowers, vivid with china and silver and the sheen of damask. They sat together, in the spell of the shaded lights, and talked, the soft, charming talk of cultured, pleasant folk.

The woman was no longer young. But her slim, gracious hands, moving about in the small duties of the good hostess, were young. And her lips were sweet with smiles.

The older of the men was speaking.

"It's—it's rather wonderful," he said, "for the three of us to be together again. It's been a whole year since we sat at this table. Eh, Gerald?"

The younger man was laughing. With a gesture quite unconscious in its affection he had reached out to touch the silk-covered arm of the woman.

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"I've been all around the world," he answered, "since last Thanksgiving Day. But—well, I had to get back for our dinner together. Somewhere I read a paragraph—in a book that I've quite forgotten—about the feet bringing us back to the place where the heart lives. Well," he chuckled boyishly, "well, my feet have proved the truth of that statement! They've brought me back!"

"I—" the other man's hand, also openly affectionate, lay for a moment across the woman's slim fingers—"I'm utterly unable to prove your truth—*if it is the truth!* For I," his eyes were looking into the woman's eyes, and a great light lay in the depths of them, "for I have never gone away—have I, dear?"

Calmly the woman answered:

"You haven't been away from my side," she said, "not for more than a few hours. Not in years—"

The younger man was speaking. His words almost ran together, he spoke so quickly.

"They say," he told the woman, "that the ladies love the prodigals of the world. Love them better than the stay-at-homes. Is that—" was there a jealous note in his voice?—"is that so?"

The woman's hand was reaching out. It touched, gently, a tiny bell that tinkled a

faint summons. It was only as a servant appeared with a loaded tray, that she answered.

"You mustn't question me," she said tenderly. "No—it's not fair! How can I answer such a question?"

The servant had deposited the contents of the tray upon the table. He turned to go. The woman was occupied with the business of serving. There was a second of silence, and then the older man spoke.

"After all," he said, "shouldn't a woman, in all fairness, love the stay-at-home best? Take—" his tone was crowded with earnestness—"take me, for instance. I've stayed at home to be near," directly he addressed the woman, "to be near *you*. I've had opportunities—lots of them. But, of course, you know. I don't have to tell you. I've given them up—gladly. Because I didn't want to leave you. I've—"

The younger man was interrupting.

"And I," he said, "what about me? I've gone around the world and left you—" he, too, was addressing the woman, in a manner both direct and appealing—"when I wanted—oh, ever so much!—not to leave you. I've gone because I felt that it would hurry my success. And I wanted to succeed. To succeed in a big way. *For you*. Isn't that reason," his tone held

a hint of pleading, "isn't that reason enough for you to love me best?"

The woman was smiling. There was something almost coquettish in her smile. Perhaps there isn't a feminine person alive who doesn't take pleasure in the fact that two men care for her—care for her very deeply and sincerely. Call it—well, call it pride, if you will!

The woman was smiling. And her voice, when she spoke, was a happy voice.

"Come, come," she said, "don't squabble! Eat your turkey, before it gets cold. Eat your cranberry-sauce; it's made after my old recipe. I—I love you both. I can't say which one I love the most. I love you each equally, I guess!"

The older man, obediently, was helping himself to the cranberry-sauce. But he had not ceased to argue. Even a turkey dinner will not keep some men from arguing!

"After all," he said, "I suppose we should be satisfied. I suppose we shouldn't plague the lady of our hearts! But is—" he was appealing to the younger man, "is there such a thing as an equal love? I ask you fairly!"

The younger man was also helping himself to the cranberry-sauce. But he answered in a manner both prompt and decisive.

"There is *not!*" he said.

The woman laughed slowly. There was something triumphant in her mirth.

"It's rather nice, at my age," she remarked, "to have two men in love with me. Most women don't even have one, I fancy! Well, my dears—my very dears,"—her fingers were suddenly clasped in an almost prayerful manner above her heart,—"let me ask each one of you a question, the same question. Have you—" her eyes were turned toward the older man—"have you ever loved anybody else?"

The older man was answering seriously.

"Not since I first met you," he told her. "And," he added with a humorous quirk, "you caught me rather young!"

The younger man was breaking in, with an almost unseemly haste—

"I can go him one better than that!" he retorted, "much better! I've never cared for another woman—not ever!"

All at once there was an alert look upon the woman's face. She leaned, suddenly, toward the younger man.

"Is that the truth, Gerald," she asked, "is that the *whole* truth? All the pretty girls you've met in foreign lands—all the women you've seen in great hotels—upon the decks of ships, haven't they ever made an"—she hesitated, very slightly—"an impression upon you?

Haven't they ever caused you to forget—me—?''

Very honestly the younger man's eyes met the woman's searching gaze. And then:

''I have never forgotten you for one second, dear,'' he said. ''And if ever a woman does make me forget you, if only for an instant—you'll be the first to know. Believe that!''

The woman's hands had slipped from her breast. They were lying, folded, in the lap of her quaintly old-fashioned gown.

''I do believe you!'' she breathed.

The dinner was almost over. The salad had followed in the wake of the plump turkey—and the dessert had come and gone. But still the woman, smiling, attractive, was the center of things. And still the two men looked into her face with adoring eyes, and hung upon her every word.

The servant came into the room. He asked a question.

''Coffee?'' he queried. ''Madam will have it in the drawing-room?''

The woman nodded her gracious, not very young, head. As she rose, it was the older man who drew back her chair, the younger one who assisted her to her feet. Although the three of them were close together, bound by invisible bonds, upon this festival of Thanksgiving, there was a certain jealousy in the way that

the two men sought to please the woman—to please her with the little courtesies, the small attentions, that lie so close to the heart of every woman.

A Thanksgiving triangle! Perhaps. But a triangle colored in soft colors—made attractive with the trappings of ease and comfort and plenty. As the woman moved slowly toward the drawing-room the stiff brocade of her gown rustled as autumn leaves rustle. And the silver of the shaded lights fell like a benediction across her silver hair.

The older man, walking on one side of her, held one of her hands upon his black broadcloth sleeve. He covered it with the strong, though aging, fingers of his own hand. The younger man walked with his arm about her still slender waist.

A woman—and the two men who loved her! A Thanksgiving triangle. . . .

Down the hall they walked, the three of them abreast. The hall was crowded with shadows, for the swift dark of late November lay across it. The two men guided, carefully, their precious charge—it was as if they were the proud possessors of something very fragile and very lovely.

Down the hall they walked and into the drawing-room. A gracious room, as seen in the gray of the dusk. The woman's ripple of

laughter sounded pleasantly through the gathering darkness of it.

"There are candles on the table," she said, "in tall holders. Let's not have the electricity—not just yet! Thanksgiving is such an old-time day—so beautifully born of the past. Let's have our coffee by candle-light!"

The two men, eager to do her bidding, had hurried to the table. The younger man struck a match sharply—its flame, blue-yellow, flared against his strong hand. He lighted the wick of the candle that the older man held—then his own.

The glow of the candles smiled across the room. It touched the woman's face with a sort of radiance—the sort of radiance that will keep one man home—free from care or worry or temptation! That will send another man, just as free, on a quest that carries him around the world—and back home again.

Standing on either side of the woman, the two men raised high their candles. It was as if they were giving her a toast—a Thanksgiving toast in the silver light.

The older man, smiling into the younger man's eyes, spoke first.

"My wife!" he said, ever so softly and reverently.

The younger man's voice sounded—just as softly—and just as reverently. "My mother!" he said.

SQUIGGLES'S TURKEY *

Ralph H. Graves

Squiggles was a boy of the sort to elicit kindness from all women and most men. In the office where he worked, the fluffy-haired typewriter girl pitied him because his lot was one grade nearer poverty than hers, and the clerks never kicked him because he looked as though he would like to be kicked. Even the Boss, who insulted everybody else, let him alone. There was a story, handed down by typewriter operators and clerks of former days, that the Boss once smiled upon the boy. In any event, Squiggles had not lost his job, as every other minion of the establishment had done sooner or later.

You might have felt a passing interest in Squiggles, but there was no room for curiosity; you knew what he was, at the first glance. It was as though you had been born with intuition sufficient to fathom the heritage of misery infolding this mite of humanity. That he had sprung from blighted babyhood to more blighted

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youth amid the reek of the tenement, without love or joy of life, was plainly traced on his pale, wizened face.

But from the untrained, uninteresting waif there gleamed a modicum of that current which draws fellow human beings. To call it magnetism would be, perhaps, an exaggeration; yet, in spite of his uncomely appearance, his evident slowness of thought, and his hesitating words, which emerged as if they were afraid of being knocked back down his throat, he made himself liked in the office. And his popularity was not altogether due to sympathy. The office was not long on sympathy. Certainly the Boss was not. As one of the men put it, Squiggles "meant well." That commonplace compliment expressed the sentiment of his co-workers.

In the course of the growth of this indefinite friendliness, he acquired his nickname. The bookkeeper awarded it for no reason except that the bookkeeper said it fitted—an opinion in which the office acquiesced, including the Boss, in whose laughterless tones the appellation "Squiggles" sounded, if possible, more woebegone than its attenuated original looked.

To Squiggles himself nothing mattered. The fleeting evidences of interest or lack of cruelty on the part of the men and women of his work-

aday world produced little, if any, change in the empty personality that a barren home had bred.

However, his life in the office had been relatively peaceful until the appearance of Jones. In the annual shifting, the old bookkeeper went, and Jones came to take his place. Jones was one of those cheap hypocrites who cringe when they look upward and tyrannize when they turn the other way.

Principally because Squiggles was smaller and weaker than any one else in sight, he became the special object of Jones's ill humors. The man's nature, in all its pettiness and brutality, found an outlet along the path of least resistance furnished by the child's incapacity for self-protection. The rôle of each was spontaneous. Jones bullied. Squiggles endured. Soon the sluggish office began to feel a listless resentment.

"It's a shame," said the typewriter girl one day, brushing back a pale curl. "You men hadn't ought to let him run it over the kid. If I was a man—"

"You'd lick Jones and lose your job, an' Squiggles'd be no better off," interrupted the sales clerk, whose common sense acted as a check upon his kindness of heart.

"Yes," the letter-file clerk agreed, "a book-

keeper's a bookkeeper, after all's said, and it ain't up to us to hang ourselves by buttin' into them that gets three plunks a week more'n any o' the rest of us, I say."

The girl sniffed contemptuously, but contented herself with mental aspersions upon Mr. Jones, whose approach was the signal for a sudden silence among his critics. And Squiggles's lot improved not a whit by reason of this or other appeals of the young woman to her courageous masculine companions.

Jones's methods, ordinarily, were in no wise original. A cuff on the ear, often repeated, satisfied the man's instinct to cause suffering. To Squiggles's own hard luck was left the credit of supplying a means of torture more exquisite, more prolonged than any which the bookkeeper's brain could have devised. It happened thus:

The typewriter girl had been sighing over a mass of notes ready to be transcribed. "Squiggles," said she, addressing him in the tone she might have used in talking to herself, "Thanksgiving'll be here next Thursday. Don't you wish we could have Thanksgiving every week?"

"Wot's the use o' Thanksgivin'?" queried the boy.

The bookkeeper turned on his high stool and leered at them.

"That's the day we all get turkeys," he interposed.

With a covert snort of dislike, the girl eradicated herself from the conversation and started to pound her machine. At least the courage of her convictions was strong enough to make her show her back to the tyrant.

"Come here, you," continued Jones, crooking a finger in the direction of Squiggles, who glided timidly toward him. "You don't mean to tell me," the man's manner became mockingly confidential, "you don't mean to say you haven't heard the news?"

"N-no, sir."

"The Boss is going to give us all turkeys on Thanksgiving Day—turkeys, big fat ones, to take home with us to have for our Thanksgiving dinners."

Squiggles looked up quickly. Into his dull eyes came something like a glint of pleasure—an expression of doubting expectancy.

"To take home with us," he repeated in a monotone.

"Yes; a gift, you know." Jones had never before spoken affably to Squiggles, and any intelligence other than one unedged by oppression would have been suspicious. "It's a new fancy of the Boss," continued the man. "He's getting generous in his old age—turkeys for everybody once a year."

As the bookkeeper turned again to his ledgers, Squiggles stood transfixed, staring into space. For him, in that moment, there was no past regret or future fear. The things that had been were blotted out. Somebody was about to recognize his existence by an act of fellowship. Something in the way of kindness was coming to him, unsolicited. The realization, novel, overpowering, almost unintelligible, left him too stunned to question the trustworthiness of his informant, even though that informant was Jones. The very proximity of the tormenter was forgotten. Squiggles smiled a wan, dreamy smile, which did not entirely vanish when he was recalled to his duties by the imperious ring of the Boss's bell.

All the rest of that day, and through the days that followed, the child went about his work with an alacrity noticeable even to the unobservant toilers of the office. His face had a new light. His hair was combed when he arrived in the morning. Though as silent and as hesitating as before, he displayed a briskness of movement and a clearness of eye that challenged attention.

"What's the matter with you?" the Boss growled.

"Nothin', sir," was the reply, and the boy's tone of fear was tinged with reverence. The

Boss gave him a quick inspection, and promptly forgot his existence.

"What's got into the kid?" the typewriter girl inquired of the shipping clerk.

"Dunno," confessed that gentleman. "Goin' nutty, I guess."

Jones, overhearing, silently bestowed upon the ledgers a leer that exposed his gold fillings in all their horror.

"Maybe," suggested the girl an hour later, when the bookkeeper was out at lunch, "maybe it's because Jones has quit cuffin' him around."

"That's so, ain't it?" The clerk stroked his forehead perplexedly. "Now, what's the matter with Jones, I'd like to know?"

Whereupon, as the subject was of only conversational interest, with no direct bearing upon either of them, they abandoned it in favor of a controversy over the merits of two rival brands of chewing-gum.

The day before Thanksgiving came, dragged through, and was about to close. At the hour for stopping work the employees left the office, one by one.

"Haven't you got your turkey yet?" asked Jones, on his way out, pausing beside the bench whereon Squiggles was waiting, as usual, until everybody else should have departed, leaving him to shut the windows and "straighten up."

The boy shook his head and glanced furtively in the direction of the Boss's room.

"It must be waiting for you downstairs," resumed the bookkeeper, with mock seriousness. "If it's not there, you just wait till he brings it to you." Laughing, the man went away, and the pitiful eyes followed him almost affectionately.

Squiggles sat and waited, and at last, when he had seen the Boss hurry out, he ran stealthily after him down the long, narrow steps to the machinery floor of the factory. He watched the Boss go into the street and vanish, in a great rush. Dazzling thought!—he was running to buy turkeys. Jones had said so. Squiggles ruminated that all the others' turkeys would be sent to their homes; he, being only the boy, would have to wait for his. With blind faith he waited.

The lights were turned low, and the last of the "help" had gone, save for the big fellow who swept the floors and locked up for the night. Squiggles squatted on the bottom step.

"Wot yer doin', hangin' around here?" asked the big chap, between sweeps.

"Turkey—my turkey," replied Squiggles.

"Turkey?"

"The Boss—he's goin' to gimme it."

"Whew-w-w!" The cleaner dropped his broom with a clatter. "Whew!" he exclaimed

again. "D'ye mean to tell me the old man's givin' you a Thanksgivin' bird?"

"Turkey," was the laconic answer.

"Is he goin' to send it here?"

Squiggles nodded assent. The sweeper whistled softly and returned to his work.

With monotonous swishes the broom moved gradually away. Squiggles watched the man's retreating bulk and listened to the music of the broom, drowsily. His head dropped on his ragged knees, when the echoes dwindled to nothing in the distant shadows. The lights seemed to fade, and the roar of the elevated trains sounded far off, and farther, until it was no sound at all.

When the sweeper went out into the night, he did not heed the huddled, softly breathing bundle of tatters at the bottom of the stairway. He had forgotten all about the boy and the tale of the turkey. He turned out the lights one by one, tossed his broom into a corner and strode off.

Stillness settled upon the factory, broken only by the rumble of the city outside. Even that was ebbing. The life of the town, which only a few hours ago had been concentrated with all its furious mercantile energy in the compact area of narrow streets and ungraceful red brick walls, was shifting miles to the north and east. But for an occasional watch-

man, the lower West Side had gone to rest until another day—and Squiggles, a cog displaced in the machine of the night's routine, slept and dreamed.

Hours meant nothing to the very tired boy, and when he awoke suddenly, at the call of a gruff voice, it was as though a mere minute had passed.

"Who's that?" said the voice, and Squiggles knew it was the Boss.

"Me, sir," he answered, yawning.

An electric switch clicked, and the Boss stood there under the light, scowling.

"Ten o'clock," he said brusquely. "Good thing for you that I forgot something and had to come back from home. Got locked in, did you?"

Squiggles smiled faintly. It was good to know that the Boss had taken all this trouble—for him. He would have liked to speak his appreciation, but he didn't know how. So he just smiled.

"Queer little buzzard," muttered the man. Then aloud: "Were you camped here for the night?"

"I—I wanted my turkey."

"What?"

"Yes, sir."

"Wake up! What's the matter with you, anyway?" Squiggles wriggled to his feet, impelled

by the harshness of the questioner. The Boss looked at him impatiently. "Talk up!"

"Yes, sir," the boy stammered, "I was waitin' for the turkey—for Thanksgivin'."

"Oh!" The Boss was not a quick man, nor a sentimental one, but no breadth of imagination was needed to discern that some strange fancy lay behind the scared eyes of the boy. "So you were waiting for a turkey?"

Squiggles replied affirmatively under his breath.

"Some one—er—promised you—" The Boss began, experimentally.

"Yes, sir—Mr. Jones."

"Ah, Mr. Jones was to bring a turkey—here—for you?"

Squiggles gazed at him, curiously for a moment, then with an expression of amusement, as if he were face to face with true humor. A little terrifying, perhaps, was this experience of festive banter with the Great One; but it was the chance of the year, and he must rise to it. With an effort he laughed a weak laugh.

"You was doin' the givin', Boss," he said.

"I!" The man gasped his astonishment, but recovered quickly; and as he threw back his head the empty room reverberated with his laughter. "Well, well, well," he roared, "to

be sure I was! Now, that's a great joke, isn't it? Just you wait here a minute."

At that the Boss strode up the steps, and Squiggles was sure he heard more laughter, after a minute's interval, from the floor above. Then the man came down, with a package of papers under his arm, and a strange mysteriously gleeful light in his eyes.

"Left these on my desk," he remarked affably, pointing to a small bundle, "because I knew I'd be back to attend to this turkey matter."

With the Boss leading, they passed out of the factory, and a latch-key fastened the door behind them. A watchman approached, recognized his employer and tipped his hat. They walked east. Squiggles had to hurry to keep pace. Once he looked up sidewise and caught the Boss's eye, and both of them smiled. The Boss plunged suddenly into a district of illumination and movement east of Broadway. They had left the domain of trade and were now in the land of the tenements. Crowded and more crowded grew the streets, until one had to quit idle thoughts and devote one's attention to the more practical problem of locomotion amongst fellow-humans.

"Here," said he at last, pausing at the confluence of many teeming sidewalks, "here we are."

The Boss was a man of action. Selecting a meat mart on the opposite side of the square, he dragged his companion into the midst of the bargain-night rush and laid violent hands upon the biggest Thanksgiving turkey in a swinging line of feathered monsters. Before Squiggles knew what had happened, the thing lay in his arms. Wrapped in its damp odors and dazed by the sudden acquirement of the long-awaited treasure, he had a subconscious vision of the Boss jingling a handful of coins into the butcher's hand, and a familiar voice came to him out of the din:

"Trot along home now. Good-night."

It was pay-day in the office. Thanksgiving was a memory forty-eight hours old.

The buzzer on Jones's desk emitted a short, rasping summons, and the bookkeeper slid from his stool. As he entered the inner sanctum, the Boss's twirling chair swung around, and the Boss said:

"I've been especially pleased with your services this week, Mr. Jones."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" Jones smirked and bowed. "I appreciate—"

"Yes," interrupted the Boss. "You've made things pleasant for me." His voice grew so soft that it was almost a purr. "But I don't want all the fun," he added quickly, "so I'm

going to deduct the price of Squiggles's Thanksgiving turkey from your pay-check. And, by the way, Jones, if I hear of your bullyragging Squiggles again, you lose your job. See?''

THE THANKSGIVING GUEST *

Louise Chandler Moulton

"Not going to make any Thanksgiving this year?"

Deacon Comstock's face expressed the utmost astonishment of which it was capable. He had come in from doing his morning "chores," and found his wife sitting down with her knitting, on this, the day before Thanksgiving—the day which should, according to all precedent, have been the busiest in the year.

"Want any help, Mother?" he had said cheerfully. "Anything I can do for you before I go out to kill the turkey?"

And then came a sudden burst of tears that quite startled him; for Mrs. Comstock was not one of the crying kind of women, and she said, amid her sobs, that she wasn't going to make any Thanksgiving this year—why should she?—what had she to be thankful for?

Deacon Comstock understood her well enough,

* From "Twilight Stories," by Louise Chandler Moulton. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company, Publishers.

for all the astonishment in his face and his voice. God's hand had been laid upon them this year, heavily. Three years before, their only son—a reckless, roistering lad, in whom there was less of actual harm than of merry mischief and impatience of restraint—had run away from his sober, Puritanical home, and gone to sea. They had never heard of him since. They knew not whether the deep sea held him or under what strange skies he sailed—on what far-off shores he roamed. This blow had been hard to bear; but Deacon John Comstock and his wife called themselves Christians, and they tried to submit their hearts in patience. And when Thanksgiving time came, and they missed merry Jack so sorely, his sister, their only daughter, had brought home, to comfort them in Jack's stead, her first baby—a little rosy boy, just old enough to laugh up in their faces, and hold out chubby arms to go from one to the other.

Two more Thanksgiving times had come and gone since then, and that child had been their consolation. His baby kisses had soothed away their heartache. With him and his father and mother to welcome, there had been something for which to make Thanksgiving.

But neither baby Joe nor his fair young mother would ever again come smiling home. One of those summer days when earth and

sky seem to meet and mingle, the gates of heaven had been left ajar, and a voice had called to child and mother. There had been a few days of terrible illness,—the pang with which soul and body had parted,—and then in the summer twilight the boy had laid his golden head on his mother's breast, and her arms had folded round him; and so the watchers coming in had found them—lying as if asleep, with the wonderful death-smile frozen upon their lips—sweet lips that would never stir more.

They had been brought back to the old homestead, and buried in one grave; and then Martha's husband had gone away to seek solace among strange scenes. He was young and strong, and for him time might bring comfort; but a bitterer woe, for which change of scene would have offered no balm, settled down upon the stricken parents. The mother, especially, mourned night and day with an agony which would not be comforted. She said nothing; but you could read her mutinous misery in the thin, wasting form, the eyes which solitary weeping had dimmed, and the hair turning white so fast. Now that at last she had begun to speak, words, bitter, rebellious words, came hotly:

"God has not been merciful, John. To thank Him would be a mockery. I lost Jack, and I bore it, and thought that in some unknown

way it must be meant for good. But I had Martha then, and little Joe, and now they, too, are gone. Shall I make a feast for the dead to eat? Whom have we left among the living?''

''And yet, Mother, let us make the feast, and it may be that the guests will come. For five and twenty years we have not failed to keep this festival together. Let us not pass it over now with thankless hearts. I, too, have mourned for our children—for those gone before us to heaven and glory, and for the wanderer whose fate we do not know. But I see the Father's mercy yet, for He has left me you, my dearest.''

He stopped, and his hand rested on his wife's shoulder with a tender touch. His words had pierced through her sullen sorrow, her numb despair, right to the core of her heart. His dearest! Was not he that to her, also; and, with him by her side, had she dared to say she had nothing for which to be thankful? What if he, too, had been taken? She looked at him with eyes in whose loving depths he never missed their girlish brightness, and said, with a new sweetness in her quivering voice:

''I have sinned, John. God *has* been merciful in sparing you. I have yet something for which to keep Thanksgiving. We will make our feast as usual. If no guests come, we can send of our abundance to the poor and the needy, and

we will partake together of Heaven's bounty with thankful hearts—we two—as we used to do in those first years before the children came."

All the rest of that day there was no lack of stir and bustle in Deacon Comstock's house. The mistress omitted nothing of the usual Thanksgiving preparations. She made the pies, the plum-pudding, the delicate cakes and jellies—every trifle that Jack or Martha had loved she took pleasure in preparing, as a sort of memorial offering. So busied, the day, which she had meant to make one of gloomy, selfish, thankless indulgence in her sorrow, passed quickly; and at night, tired though she was, her face wore a look at once brighter and more peaceful than her husband had seen on it since Martha and Martha's child had gone to sleep in the summer twilight.

Through the evening they sat and talked together—peaceful, tender talk about the dead, and about the absent. Especially they spoke of Jack, of his merry, boyish ways, of his loving heart, of his courage and his truth. All that was noblest in him seemed to live again in their memories. They forgot how wilful, and obstinate, and hard to rule he was, and only remembered him at his best.

"My mind misgives me often, Mother, lest we were too hard on the boy," the deacon said,

at last. "I think we drew the reins too tight, and his mettle was too high to stand it. And now no one knows what his fate will be!"

"Yes, God knows," the wife answered softly. Since morning, convinced anew of God's mercy to herself, her faith seemed somehow to have grown. "God is as near to him, John, as to us—on the sea as well as on the land. We shall see the boy again—if not here, there, where there is no sea. It is borne in upon my mind that the Lord will hear our prayers, and that when we walk in His heaven we shall not miss the face of our boy."

And then hand in hand they knelt and prayed for their wanderer,—for all wanderers—for all sorrow-stricken and lonely souls—for all those who grope in the darkness of this world,—prayed that the celestial morning might break for them by and by, and the tired feet rest safely where wait the many mansions.

The snow had begun falling with the twilight. The rambling country village was still. Under every home roof the loved ones were gathered in, sheltered from storm, and cold, and care—waiting for the morrow. There seemed something ominous in the very stillness to a traveler who walked along the highway. He had stopped at a railroad station two miles off, whither he had come in a late train, and he was now making his way on foot, through

the softly falling snow, over paths which seemed to be familiar to him. It made him think of cerements folded above the dead—this white, still-falling snow which was covering the cold, frozen shape of hills and valleys. A fear stole into his heart and chilled the blood in his veins—a superstitious fear, perhaps, born of the night stillness, the gleaming snow, the darkness through which all objects loomed ghostly and uncertain as phantoms. He turned aside from the highway, and walked rapidly through a lane into a little country graveyard, and on among the graves, until he reached the farthest corner, and stood under the shade of a great, heavily drooping willow, in a lot set apart from the rest by an iron railing.

Then he stood and counted the gravestones,—grandfather, grandmother, two uncles, the tiny slab with his baby sister's name, the sister whom he could just remember as a blue-eyed wonder, with golden curls and lips as bright as red berries,—all those he knew; but whose was that other stone, which was not there when last he stood under that willow? He brushed away the snow with his hand, and felt for the inscription which it was too dark to see. But his fingers were almost stiffened with the cold, and he could only be sure of the first letter, a capital M. His fears sprang into the stature of convictions—it was the initial letter of his

mother's name. This, then, was the work which these three years had wrought—the home he was coming to was one where no mother's face would smile, no mother's voice would welcome him. And if his going away had killed *her,* what hope was there that his father would ever forgive him? Might he not as well go back in the night and the storm, and carry his sorrow with him—vanish, as he had come, in the darkness, making no sign? For a moment, standing irresolute among those graves, under that willow, he argued the question with himself; and then it seemed to him that a voice he used to know and love called him, as one might call a lost child through the darkness:

"Come home, boy, come home!"

He hesitated no longer, but walked on swiftly through the falling snow, until he stood before Deacon John Comstock's door, and lifted the ponderous knocker with a hand that trembled despite the brave courage of his young manhood. He drew his soft hat close over his eyes, and wrapped his coat around him, with its collar turned up, so that only a straight nose and a bit of brown beard were in sight when the deacon opened the door.

"It is storming," he said. "Can you give me shelter?"

It was not the boyish voice which used to ring so merrily in Martha Comstock's ears,—

it was fuller, deeper than that other voice, and less smooth,—but there was something in it which made her heart beat chokingly. The stranger crossed the threshold, and the light fell on the little of his face that was in sight. She had kissed a beardless boy the last time she bade merry Jack good-night; but no change of voice, no bronze or beard deceived the mother's heart.

"Our Father has sent the guest!" she cried; "Oh, John, He has sent the guest!" as she sprang forward and took her own boy, snow and all, into her close, trembling arms. "My boy! my own boy Jack!" murmured into the wanderer's ears the fond, fond voice he had longed to hear through so many nights, tossing on stormy seas, with only a plank between him and eternity. He was indeed at home.

PRAIRIE BIRD'S THANKSGIVING *

Julia D. Peck

Good Mrs. Towne was elbow-deep in the mysteries of Thanksgiving mince-pies, though it was only the middle of November, for every one knows, if she knows anything, that Thanksgiving mince-pies should be made at least ten days beforehand. The kitchen was very hot, and the door stood open to admit a little fresh air.

Through it came the question: "Please, will you have these bittersweet berries?"

Mrs. Towne looked up from her kettle of savory mince-meat at the sound of the sweet, plaintive voice.

At the door stood the quaintest little girl of seven years, or thereabout, with the blackest of eyes looking out from a sad, oldish face, kissed brown by sun and wind. She wore a cap over her thick black hair, a boy's reefer, much too small for her, a short red skirt and

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broken shoes. Her small brown hands were filled with vines of the bittersweet.

"Who are you, my dear?" asked Mrs. Towne, when she found her voice.

"Prairie Bird Missouri Gripper," said the child. "And we live in the little house, with moss all over the roof, beyond the walnut wood. Pa's 'greed to chop all the trees else we would be movin' 'fore now. I just wish they'd keep growin' faster'n he could cut 'em."

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Mrs. Towne. "What a name! Come right in; you look chilled through with this frosty air. Whatever was your mother thinking of to give you such a queer name?"

"Oh, if you think my name's queer, you just ought to hear the others," laughed the child. "There's Catawissa, Ellijay, Flatbush, Kickapoo, Hackensack, Huckleberry, and—let me see how far I've got. Oh, Juba comes next, and Bonny Eagle, and little Tripton. She's the last baby, and I b'lieve that's all."

"Well, that beats me!" cried Mrs. Towne, dropping her spoon into the kettle. "I never heard anything like it."

"Nobody ever did," said the girl, looking around the pleasant kitchen with evident pleasure. "I'll tell you how it was. You see, they're always moving. They've been all over. So Ma took the freak of naming us after the town

and State in which we were born. I can't remember all the States that are between names, but they're all different."

"It must be a dreadful harrowin' life, to be always movin'," said Mrs. Towne. "I don't see how your mother can stand it."

"Why, she just loves it," said Prairie Bird. "They all do but me—every one. Ma says she'd die if she had to live in one place long enough to take root. I keep hoping they'll find a place that they won't want to leave, but it's no use. Some mornin' I wake up to find they've begun to pack, and they rig up the old schooner and hitch up the mules, and we start for a new state. Oh, I just long for a home like other girls. We can't even have graves like most folks. There's poor little Hickory left way down in Texas. It makes me cry when I think of it." And the child choked back a sob.

"Poor dear!" said Mrs. Towne, with tears of sympathy coming. "I don't wonder you feel so."

" 'Fore we came here I made such a pretty garden and set out ferns and lovely things, but I had to leave 'em all to die. Oh, how good it smells here; but I'm 'fraid I'm botherin' you and ought to be goin'."

"No, you don't trouble me—not a bit," Mrs. Towne hastened to say, for the girl interested her strangely. "I'll keep right on with my pies.

I'm beginning to get ready for Thanksgiving."

"We never had any Thanksgivin' or Christmas or company or holidays," said the girl, wistfully. "But sometimes I've got a little whiff of somebody else's Thanksgivin', but never anything so nice as yours. What do you do?"

"Why, we go to church and thank God for all his good gifts for the year past, and we invite our friends home and have the best dinner we can cook—turkey, chicken pie, plum-pudding, and everything that's nice. It's one of the happiest days of the whole year. Here's a little turnover I must have baked for you." And she held out the flaky, brown pie to the child.

"Oh, it is better than anything I ever ate," said the little girl, biting off dainty nibbles. "If it wasn't so little, I couldn't take it. Oh, I just love it here, it's so homey, and you are so good. But I'd better go now, I guess. Good-by."

She caught up her cap and was darting away, but Mrs. Towne stopped her.

"Wait a minute; I want to give you a basket of apples," she said. "We have so many—more than we can use."

"But Ma wouldn't like it," said the girl, wistfully; "she never lets us take things 'less we earn them. She says we are not beggars.

I'll have to tell her 'bout the little pie, and I guess she'll excuse that."

"But you brought me the pretty berries—just what I want for Thanksgiving. My boy, who lives 'way off in California, used to get them for me when he was at home, and I put them over the mantel in the parlor and above the pictures, but I haven't had any since he went away; so you see I'm glad enough to have them. You must take the apples in exchange."

"Oh, if you really want 'em, I'd be so glad. Ma said you wouldn't—maybe. But I didn't 'spect anything for 'em. There are so many where we are, and I've been by here, and it looked so pretty, with vines all over and flowers in the windows; so I just had to come in. I knew you'd be nice—and I get so lonesome."

"Why, are you the only little girl?" asked Mrs. Towne.

"Yes'um, 'cause Ellijay and Huckleberry and Brown Eagle are grown up, and they're always working, and the little boys have to pick up chips and wood, and nobody minds about me."

"You may come every day and stay with me," said Mrs. Towne. "I'd like to have you, for I get lonesome, too."

"If you'd only let me help you," said Prairie Bird. "I'd be just happy. Don't you s'pose I could?" The gypsy child looked up, wistfully.

"Why, of course you can. I've no doubt you could save me lots of steps," the good woman answered. And she watched the child as she took the apples and ran across the field.

"I've had the queerest little visitor," she said to her husband when he came home from his work that night, "and I don't know when I've been so interested. Do you know anything about that family that live in the little house in Joe Picket's walnut grove?"

Mr. Towne was scrubbing his face at the kitchen sink. He was a very deliberate man, and he used the roller-towel vigorously before he answered.

"I've seen 'em round there—any quantity of 'em, big and little, fat and lean. Joe says he can't make 'em out. He says they're honest and hard-working,—not like ordinary Gypsies,—only they're always moving. They've been about all over the country. Was it one of them?"

"Yes, a little girl, and, some way, she made me think of our little Ruth every time I looked at her."

"I reckon I've seen her," said Mr. Towne. "The girl with the big, black eyes and sad, little face? Wal, to tell the truth, she made me think of Ruthie, too, though she didn't look a mite like her."

The next morning Mrs. Towne found herself looking across the field whenever she passed

the south window, and presently she saw the child coming, her red skirt making a bright spot against the background of woods.

"Ma said I might come if you'd be sure to let me work," Prairie Bird announced as soon as Mrs. Towne opened the door; "and she told me to be very careful not to break or spill anything, and to come home the minute you got tired of me."

"Maybe you'll get tired of me first," laughed Mrs. Towne, "for I'm going to make pound-cake to-day, and I promise you I shall keep you busy. There are the raisins to stone, the citron to slice, and spices to pound. Oh, I'll keep you from getting into mischief."

"It'll be such fun!" said the little girl. "But first I must make my hands very clean, if you'll tell me where to wash 'em. Do you know, my ma never in all the world made any such spicy, nice-smelling things as you do. It seems *so* good to be in it."

She entered into the spirit of the festive preparations with childish enthusiasm. She fairly reveled in the delightful work of the hot, odorous kitchen. It was a pleasure to watch the smiles and dimples play over her dark, bright face. She was so interested in the minutest details and so eager to learn that it was an enjoyment to teach her.

The great spicy, brown loaves were baked

before dinner, and then, after they were cool, Prairie Bird must help about the icing. When everything was done Mrs. Towne brought out an old hair trunk filled with toys, picture-books, and dolls, and the child, whose childhood had been unconsidered, was so happy that the sun had set and daylight was almost gone before Mrs. Towne had the heart to send her home. But early the next morning she came again, eager to begin a new day in the bright farm-house kitchen.

"I never saw such a change in any one as there is in Prairie Bird," Mrs. Towne told her husband. "She's just like a poor neglected plant brought into the sunlight. I believe she is just starving for affection. I wish, Josiah, they'd give the child—but then, of course, they won't. I've grown so fond of her, seems as if I could hardly get through the day without her. She's just as good company as if she was grown up, and she's so quaint and sensible. I'm going to have her here Thanksgiving and see if I can't make it the happiest day the child ever had."

"Why, ain't you going to have the usual crowd?" asked Josiah. "All the uncles, aunts, and cousins, and the young 'uns by the dozens? Every mother's son is whetting his appetite already in anticipation."

"I can't help it," said Mrs. Josiah; "they

have spent every Thanksgiving here since I was married. They sort of expected to be invited here because it was the old homestead and your mother began it; but this year I'm going to invite some of the neighbors—Joe Jenks and Steve Dutton's folks and the Willises. They've all got children about Prairie Bird's age, and they'll play together and have a good time. I've got it all planned—but, of course, Josiah, if you'd rather have your relations!"

"What suits you'll suit me, Lois," said Mr. Towne, with his usual good-nature. "Thanksgiving is an old tale to them, but it's a glimpse into the promised land to little Bird, I reckon."

Two days before Thanksgiving Mrs. Towne was washing the supper dishes and wondering why Prairie Bird had not come as usual to the farm-house, when there came a knock at the kitchen door. She opened it to a tall, dark woman dressed with a total disregard of Dame Fashion's rules. Yet there was something in her plain, rugged face that commanded respect.

"I'm Mrs. Gripper," she announced, as she took the chair offered her. "Well, marm, it does look sort of pleasant here, that's a fact! Plants a-growin', easy chairs, everything a-shinin'. That air little girl o' mine—she's sort of bewitched or somethin'. Talks 'bout you people the whole time and dreams 'bout you nights. She really thinks you set a good deal

by havin' her come here, but I tell her it don't stand to reason that most folks want to have other folks' young ones a-botherin' 'em."

"She's a dear child," said Mrs. Towne, "and I like to have her come. She saves me a good many steps, too."

"Well, I guess you're dyed in the wool," remarked Mrs. Gripper, after a careful scrutiny of Mrs. Towne. "You look genuine, and I guess you be; so I'll have to b'lieve what you say. Yes, Prairie Bird's a tolerable good child, as children go, only she can't, someway, take kindly to movin'. She always is a-longin' to settle, but all the rest of us has got the rovin' blood. We sha'n't be contented to settle till we take our long, last sleep.

"So, you see," Mrs. Gripper went on, "she sort o' harasses me, for I can't bear to see her a-pinin' 'round. Ever sence she's got to comin' here she seems like a different child, and I really b'lieve—though I hate to own it—she thinks more of you all than she does of us. Queer—ain't it? Then, about Thanksgivin': she jest makes us tired a-talkin' 'bout it and a-keepin' us awake nights."

"I hope you'll let her come here Wednesday and stay over," said Mrs. Towne. "I've just set my heart on having her have a right good time."

"I'm most sorry you've said anything about

her comin','' said the woman. ''She hasn't any clothes for dress occasions. Somehow, society has always got along without us heretofore.''

''I have a worsted dress I'm sure will fit her,'' said Mrs. Towne. ''I hope you won't mind, for this once.''

''Well, you've been so kind and clever to the child I'll have to let you have your own way, I reckon. If I should disappoint her now, I s'pose she'd never look up after it. One of these days we'll be foldin' our tents like the Arabs and silently stealin' away, and I'd like her to have one warranted-not-to-fade good time, as you say. Yes, I reckon I'll let her come. Good-by, marm, I wish you well.''

Then as unceremoniously as she came the woman departed.

Mrs. Towne was chopping the dressing for the big turkey the next morning when the door opened and Prairie Bird rushed in.

''There are signs,'' she sobbed. ''Ma's baking piles of bread and doughnuts, and Bonny Eagle is patching up the schooner. It seems as if I don't want to live any longer.''

She sat down on the floor and buried her face in her hands, sobbing convulsively.

''Signs don't always come true, and if I were you I'd just not think any more about it—not for two days, anyway,'' said Mrs. Towne, though her own heart was heavy.

"We've got lots to do to-day. There are the cranberries to look over, the citron to chop, and heaps of other things. To-morrow is Thanksgiving, and no one must be unhappy then."

Prairie Bird sprang up and dashed the tears from her eyes. "You always make me happy!" she cried. "You're so settled, and I love you—oh, I can't tell you how much! Do I pick out all the little shriveled-up berries? Oh, I *do* love to help you better'n anything."

All that day Prairie Bird was beaming, and the dimples played on her bonny brown face. She was tired but happy when all the preparations for the day were ended. Then Mrs. Towne brought out a dark-red worsted dress and ruffled white apron.

"These are for you to wear to-morrow," she said. "Dolly Breed always helps me Thanksgiving Days, and you are to be company to-morrow. I want you to have the happiest day you have ever had."

Prairie Bird wondered, as she lay in her pretty white bed, how she could possibly be any happier. Mrs. Towne's motherly kiss was on her lips, and the pretty dress lay near her on a chair. She reached out and felt of the soft folds, then drew it to her and kissed it.

She dropped off to sleep to dream of Thanksgiving and waked to find it a reality. Such rav-

ishing odors as penetrated her bedroom and filled the house all that long, happy day! She could hardly keep from dancing as she walked beside Mr. and Mrs. Towne to church. And when the people stood up to sing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," she wanted so much to join though she did not know the tune. But she sat very quiet and demure and listened to the merry voices and happy laughter of the guests around the long dinner-table in too blissful a state of mind to eat.

"Why don't you eat your turkey?" asked Clara Dutton, who sat beside her. "It's ever so good."

"I know it," said Prairie Bird.

"You've got a big plate full to eat," said Clara, "and then there's the chicken pie, and the plum-pudding, and all the other pies and nuts and everything."

"I know it," said Prairie Bird, again, "but it seems—some way—as if I couldn't. I guess, maybe, it's because I never had any Thanksgivin' before."

Clara looked at her in wide-eyed astonishment. She couldn't understand it, but she was too polite a child to ask any questions that might hurt the feelings of her new friend.

"Then you'll think it the jolliest day of all

the year," she said, "for Auntie Towne says we may have the big sitting-room all to ourselves after dinner, and we know lots of lovely games, and we're going to pop corn and crack nuts and do anything we want to do."

"I wish it could last forever and ever," said Prairie Bird. "Oh, I wish it could!"

But it came to an end all too soon. The guests had gone, Dolly Breed last of all, taking with her a generous basket of good things.

"Well, it's chore time," said Farmer Towne, taking down his hat. "Why, here comes Joe Picket's boy with a letter."

"Mis' Gripper said I was to wait till night 'fore I brung it," he said and hurried away. It was directed to Mrs. Towne. Mr. Towne looked over her shoulder as she read:

Respected Madam:

When this reaches you we shall be again on the march, never to return. We leave Prairie Bird to your tender mercies. She is a likely child, and we hate to part with her, but she was only a graft on the Gripper tree. Her blood flows in quiet channels, while ours rushes madly over rocks and ledges. 'Bout eight years ago we had just landed in Missouri when a terrible cyclone passed by us without so much as ruffling one of our feathers. It swept everything in its path, and not a human thing was left alive but a speck of a baby. That was Prairie Bird. We took

her and done by her as we did by our own. But you need her, and we give you a clear title-deed, reserving no rights. Do by her as you hope to be done by.

Your obedient servant,
CHARITY GRIPPER.

"Gee whitaker!" ejaculated Mr. Towne.

Prairie Bird was watching them in intense excitement, a tiny red spot burning in either cheek. The yellow envelope was like the ones her mother used on the very rare occasions when she patronized Uncle Sam's postal service. She could not have told what she feared, but her heart ached with dread. She saw Mrs. Towne's face grow pale and her hand tremble as she laid down the letter.

"That beats the Dutch—don't it, Mother?" said Mr. Towne. "But there couldn't have anything better happened to end Thanksgiving Day—now, could there?"

Mrs. Towne smiled up in his face, then at the child. "Come here, Prairie Bird; I have something to tell you," she said.

The girl sprang into her lap, but did not speak.

"That letter was from Mrs. Gripper," she explained, softly stroking the child's hair. "They have gone and have left you to us to be our own little girl; so you need never fear about moving any more."

The girl's breath came fast; she clung to Mrs. Towne, sobbing convulsively. At last she raised her head and whispered:

"Don't tell anybody, but it's because I'm so glad—why I'm crying. If I didn't cry, I should fly all to pieces—I'm sure I should, for I'm more'n full; and I couldn't laugh, you know, for that would look as if I didn't love Ma Gripper and all the others, when I do; but, oh! I love you, somehow, different and a thousand times better, for it seems as if you were my own real ma—it does, truly. And I shall always love Thanksgivin' Days as long as I live."

THANKSGIVING SNOW-SHOES *

Ben Ames Williams

This was before the day of town waterworks in Forestville. Most folks relied for water upon a cistern in the back yard, or a well lined with moss-covered stone. Dick Hart's father, when he built their new home, looked ahead a few years, however, and saw that town water would come; and so the house was piped for that day. In the meantime, the water was to come from a lead-lined tank in the attic, which supplied the faucets by gravity; and to fill this tank, there was a pump in the kitchen.

Dick hated that pump the first time he saw it. It stood higher than he did, with a great long iron handle like a cudgel; and it was painted red and black, so that it had a sinister and wicked air about it. Dick hated the pump still more when they were in the new house; for it devolved upon him to keep the tank filled.

"That's your job, Dick," his father told him. "I leave it to you to look out for it."

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Dick looked dubiously from the pump to his father. "All right, Dad," he agreed. "Here goes. I'll fill it up for a starter, anyway."

Even then he had a pretty good idea that it would be quite a job to fill that tank; and it was. That first day he pumped endlessly, first pulling upward the heavy iron handle, and then pushing it down with all his strength. At first it came easily, but after ten minutes or so it was moving more and more stiffly, and there was a blister on Dick's palm. He wrapped a handkerchief around it to ease the smart and worked on.

A little pipe, opening into the sink, served as telltale. When the tank in the attic was filled, water would trickle from this pipe. Dick stuck to it till the first trickle came, but he was so stiff and sore that night that even his fatigue could not make him sleep. And he dreamed about that red-and-black pump.

In later days he discovered that when the tank in the attic was empty, it required just fifteen hundred strokes to fill it. Thereafter he counted them laboriously, and when the goal was nearly reached, watched the telltale pipe eagerly for the first drops of water. He became so expert that his ear could catch the faint puff of air from the little pipe that told him the water had begun its trickling progress

down from the attic, and that meant his task was done.

Dick's mother did most of her own housework; but her washing was done by a woman who "came in by the day." This woman's name was Attson—Mrs. Attson. She was a tall, gaunt woman, with a face that reminded Dick of Abraham Lincoln's, so raw-boned it was and so lined with the burdens she had borne. Her husband was dead, Dick knew; and she had two children, little girls, each as thin and gaunt as their mother. To support them she did washing, scrubbing, and kindred odd jobs, toiling from dawn to dark at her own home or at the houses of those for whom she worked.

Dick did not like her the first time he saw her. She was too ugly, somehow. There was a fierce repulsion in him at her ugliness. He had an instinctive sense that a woman should be graceful and smooth of contour and agreeable to the eye, as was his mother. But as he grew to know the washerwoman better, he was not so sure that she was ugly, after all. There was something about her face—well, to watch it, and to see how it changed when she smiled, and to notice the kindly light in her tired eyes—it sort of made a fellow choke up, somehow.

Dick saw a good deal of her, too, for that infernal pump kept him in the kitchen no inconsiderable part of the day. He used to toil and toil at

that red-and-black handle, while Mrs. Attson bent above the wash-tubs, her shoulders moving up and down, while she scrubbed, as regularly as the walking-beam on a river steamer. Dick wondered how she could keep going so steadily. She never seemed to tire, while he himself found his back aching and his sides nigh splitting with grinding pain after he had wrestled with that pump for a while.

One day—a hot day, it was, in late September—Dick counted from one stroke up to five hundred, knew his task was but a third done, flung back from the pump, and dropped in a chair, panting and hot. He glared at that grim iron thing, and suddenly saw red with rage. He threw himself at it and whipped the handle up and down like mad for a moment. Mrs. Attson looked up from her tubs and wiped her sudsy hands on her apron.

"That don't do no good, Dickie," she said gently.

Her voice quieted him, somehow, and he dropped the pump-handle and sat down again.

"I know it," he said sullenly. "The old thing kicks like a steer if you work it fast, and not so much water goes up, either. I've counted, and I know."

"Lemme try it a spell," she said; and stepping across to the pump, she laid hold of the

handle. Dick flushed and got to his feet and pushed in front of her.

"No, no!" he protested, ashamed. "It—it ain't work for a woman."

She chuckled softly, her grim old face wrinkling comfortably. "Shucks, Dickie!" she said. "It hain't work fer me, it's play—changin' from the tubs fer a spell."

She thrust him aside, and he submitted. Then Mrs. Attson, with the same tireless motion of her shoulders with which she bent above her tubs, manipulated the pump-handle for a while. Dick was dead tired. He just sat there and watched, and automatically he counted the strokes. Suddenly he realized that she had passed the five-hundred mark. At that he leaped up again.

"Here!" he said gruffly, gratitude choking him, "I guess you've done enough of that. I can do the rest."

She relinquished the pump-handle to him. "It does hit you in the back some, don't it?" she agreed.

Dick finished filling the tank, and, when it was done, searched guiltily around till he found the coal-bucket, which he usually left Mrs. Attson to fill for herself. He filled it for her, without ostentation, and left it behind the stove.

And thereafter a sort of partnership was struck up between the two. On the days when

Mrs. Attson was at the house, Dick took particular pains to see that the coal and other things she needed were ready to her hand; and she, in her turn, helped him out when he was tired at the pump. And so, without much being said on either side, Dick got better acquainted with the gaunt, tired, hard-working woman every day.

Dick's elder brother had gone away to college the year before—to a college in the New Hampshire hills. When he came home in the summer for the long vacation, he brought with him, among others of his various belongings, a pair of snow-shoes. Dick had read of such things, but he had never seen them. Forestville had an occasional snow of a foot or so, but it never stayed long, and there was little use for snow-shoes thereabouts. Nevertheless, when Dick saw them, he wanted a pair. He kept the ambition to himself, for the older folks would no doubt laugh at such a desire.

"I could use them sometimes," he told himself, "and anyway, when I go to college, I'd have them all ready. Or I might go to Canada sometime—or something."

He asked his brother, casually, what they cost, and was told they could be purchased for six dollars—a good pair, long and narrow, on the woods model, built to glide easily through thick brush, where the broader, more famil-

iar shape would knock against every tree.

"I'm going to get them," Dick resolved, and said to his brother, "If I send you the money, will you get me a pair?"

"What use have you got for snow-shoes?" his brother asked.

"We-ell, I just want some," Dick protested, flushing. "I guess I can hang 'em on the wall of my room till I go to college, can't I?"

His brother chuckled. "Sure! I'll get you a pair, all right, if you'll send the money. But where are you going to raise it?"

"Oh, I'll get it!" Dick promised.

And thereupon his ambition took more definite form, and he set about the task of amassing a fortune—six dollars.

It seems comparatively little, but to a boy of Dick's age it is wealth. Dick had no particular earning capacity. He could cut lawns and carry coal and empty ashes, and that was about all. He began experiments, and found a surprising number of folks willing to let him cut their grass "for fifteen cents."

Dick got his father's permission to borrow the lawn-mower, and began his business career. He tackled a little lawn first, and finished the job, as he thought, before demanding payment. But his employer was a sharp-eyed little old lady, who came out on her veranda and pointed accusingly to the rough edges of the

grass around her flower-beds and along her walks.

"You must trim that up," she told him. "The job isn't finished till you do."

Dick had forgotten that part of the task. He hurried home to get a sickle and set to work. Using a sickle had seemed easy enough when others did it, but Dick found it far from that. The blade seemed to slide through the grass without making the slightest impression, and more than once it darted around alarmingly near his ankles. He was reduced, at length, to picking the rough grass off with his fingers, or to holding a bunch with his hand while he sawed it loose with the sickle.

He got the job done at last. It took two of his afternoons after school, and, by that time, half of his other prospective customers had found some one else to do the work for them. He asked his first client if he should come again the following week.

"Oh, no," she told him, "it's so late in the fall that I'm sure it won't need cutting again this year."

Dick pocketed his fifteen cents gloomily. He had earned his money, but his occupation was gone. Within the week he had cut two more lawns. One was terraced, and the strain of running the lawn-mower along the slanting surface of the terraces was all but too much

for him. He literally chewed that grass off. It took him all Saturday morning, and when it was done, the man who owned the lawn came out and looked sternly at the finished product and said:

"Young man, that isn't a good clean job! I don't want to refuse you your money, but it will be a lesson to you to do things properly. I can't pay you unless you go over the lawn again."

Dick looked at those terraces. "We-ell," he said doubtfully, "I—guess I'd rather let the fifteen cents go."

That cured Dick of the lawn busniess. He realized there was no money in it, and set about to find new sources of revenue. He found them; but in them all, he discovered, money came hard. He began to have a new respect for money. Heretofore, he had felt somewhat injured at his father's occasional refusal of a request for a coin. Now he began to wonder whether his father had to work as hard as this for the money he earned. It gave him a new outlook on many things.

His mother discovered Dick's new desire for income, and, watching him for a few days, saw that it persisted. She decided to encourage it.

"Dick," she said one day, "I think you ought to have a chance to earn money regularly, don't you?"

Dick looked at her in surprise. His mother had a curious habit, it seemed, of reading his heart and his thoughts. "Uh-huh," he said doubtfully. "Yes, I think so."

"Well, I'll tell you," she suggested. "I believe I will put you on a salary."

"Salary?" he repeated.

"Yes, salary. I think I'll pay you twenty-five cents a week for your chores around the house, and, say, a cent a hundred strokes for the pumping you do."

She watched him, and Dick's eyes grew glassy with the mental effort of computation; then his face lighted eagerly.

"All right," he said soberly. "I—guess that'd be fine."

The tank in the attic needed to be filled about three times a week. That meant about forty-five hundred strokes—forty-five cents a week besides the quarter for chores. Seventy cents a week! Riches! He went to his room and laboriously added up. He would have the six dollars, he decided, by the third week in November—by Thanksgiving!

"Golly!" he thought. "And I'll bet there'll come a big snow then, too. There's pretty near always snow Thanksgiving."

A little later his mother heard the pump in the kitchen working desperately, and she smiled to herself. That night Dick, of his own accord

took a bath. Next night he did the same. She smiled again and told Dick's father what she had done.

"The boy's making a market for his own work; he's using up the water so the tank will have to be filled oftener," she explained.

"Hope it'll last!" his father retorted.

Thanksgiving that year came on the twenty-fourth of November. On the seventeenth Dick counted his money. He had five dollars and thirty cents. His goal, those snow-shoes, was in sight!

On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, Dick's mother told his father, "I've ordered our turkey again this year from Mr. Aiken out in the country."

"Good!" his father agreed. "He sent us a fine fat one last year."

"And I think," Mrs. Hart added, "that we're going to have the finest pumpkin-pie you ever saw. Mr. Aiken says he has a big yellow pumpkin all picked out for us."

Dick's mouth fairly watered. Next morning Mrs. Attson came to do the washing, as usual. She and Dick were the best of friends now, though Dick, as he had begun to earn wages by his efforts, had the conscience to do his own pumping. Dick toiled at the pump while she toiled above the tubs. He watched her over his shoulder, and it seemed that she was even

more gaunt than she had been in the summer. She looked worried, too, he thought.

By and by he was sure of it, for she began to tell him what it was that was worrying her. One of her daughters was sick, "just sort of pindling away," Mrs. Attson said. Didn't seem to feel right, no matter what happened; hadn't any appetite hardly at all. Didn't he think even little girls ought to have good appetites for their "vittles"?

Dick did. "I don't see how she can enjoy Thanksgiving without a good appetite," he said, chuckling to himself at thought of the good things his mother was planning.

Mrs. Attson smiled also. "I'm plannin' a right nice Thanksgiving dinner for her, too," she declared. "If it don't make her hungry, I don't know what will."

Dick labored away at the pump.

"What are you going to have?" he asked.

Mrs. Attson beamed proudly. "Why," she said, "I'm plannin' a right nice dinner, even if we do have to piece out afterwards for a spell." She soused one of Dick's shirts in the soapy water, and scrubbed it up and down, and soused it again. "I'm going to git a nice piece of meat, not chuck like we has Sundays sometimes, but a right nice piece—rump steak, maybe. And she's going to have the best part of it. And some rice and potatoes—sweet potatoes fried

in sugar the way she likes 'em. And I'm going to make some apple fritters from some apples I got, too."

Dick pumped his hardest, but he couldn't look at Mrs. Attson. Her voice was so proud! And Dick was horrified. He had supposed every one had turkey for Thanksgiving. He didn't know there was such a thing as Thanksgiving without turkey. Why it wouldn't *be* Thanksgiving without turkey, that's all!

He pumped harder than ever; and then Mrs. Attson asked, as proudly as before, "Don't you think that ought to wake up her appetite a lot?"

"I—sure do," Dick choked hurriedly. Then he growled something at himself under his breath. What the deuce was he crying for, anyhow? Guess it must be the steam in this kitchen—or something.

He decided not to finish his pumping that day. He turned around without a word and scurried past Mrs. Attson and up to his room. After a little while he heard the pump going steadily. She was filling the tank for him! He got up and started downstairs to stop her—but he could not face her. She was so proud of that Thanksgiving she had planned. Rump steak!

"Mother, is—rump steak cheap?" he asked that night.

"Why yes, dear," his mother answered. "Why in the world—"

But she did not pursue the question.

Before he went to bed, Dick counted his money again. Somehow he felt guilty at having so much.

Tuesday morning, when he woke up, it was snowing. It snowed all day. There were ten inches of snow on the ground when Dick's father came home that night. Dick looked out of his window before he went to bed. It had stopped snowing. But before the dawn, the flakes were falling again, a thin, driving snow, the kind that keeps coming.

Dick had had an uncomfortable Tuesday; he had done some hard thinking Tuesday night; and Wednesday morning he got out his money—he kept it in a drawer in his bureau—and counted it again. Then he did some more thinking, then put the money away again and thrust the drawer shut with extra emphasis. And forthwith he seemed to see the tall, gaunt figure of a woman with a face curiously like that of Lincoln, and she was laboring with something, her shoulders rising and falling. She was working the red-and-black handle of a red-and-black pump—

Then Dick could see nothing, for the mistiness of his eyes. But he could hear a cracked, tired voice, filled with infinite pride, saying,

"Rump steak, maybe, and some rice and potatoes."

"Oh—oh—oh, dog-gone it!" Dick exclaimed savagely; and he jerked open that drawer and picked up his money, coin by coin.

"What are you buying a turkey for?" Mr. Holman, the fat grocer, asked quizzically when Dick made his purchase.

"Oh—I'm just getting one—for somebody," Dick explained lamely. "And—I want some cranberries, too—and a pumpkin, a big one."

Mrs. Attson lived in a ramshackle little house, unpainted, with a sway-backed roof, down near the railroad tracks. Dick had hauled the washing down there once or twice when his mother did not wish the work done at their home. He trudged down that way through the deep snow in the early dusk of that Wednesday afternoon, with a heavily loaded basket on his arm. It had been snowing all day. There must be a foot and a half or two feet of snow on the ground, a record-breaker for Forestville.

Dick didn't mind—so much. "I prob'ly couldn't walk on them if I had 'em," he said to himself.

Nobody saw him, he felt sure. It was almost dark. There was a light in the window of Mrs. Attson's house, so he knew some one was at home. He laid the basket gently in the deep snow by the door, and then slipped out to the

street, where, from behind a telephone-pole, he threw snowballs at the door till he caught the click of the latch. Some one was going to open it.

Then he put down his head and fled.

His father had not come home when he arrived, but his mother was reading a letter from the older brother at college. "Jim says they're having snow up there, too," she said. "He's been snow-shoeing. And Dick—he says you said something about buying some snow-shoes. Did you?"

Dick flushed painfully. "Why—yes 'm," he confessed.

She looked at him thoughtfully. "Dickie," she exclaimed suddenly, "was that why you've been working so hard, and saving your money? I knew you weren't spending any, and I wondered!"

"Uh-huh," Dick admitted, gulping hard.

"That's fine, boy!" she told him proudly. "How much have you saved? Perhaps I can make up what you need."

Dick hesitated and kicked at a chair and threw his hat out into the hall. "I—I—it's gone!" he said gruffly.

"Gone!—what?" she asked, puzzled.

"The money," he said.

"But—but—where?"

Dick suddenly flared at her. "If I knowed

where it was, wouldn't I go get it?" he demanded. And then, quite suddenly, he knew he was going to blubber, and so he turned and stumbled at a run up the stairs to his room.

His mother was still staring out into the hall when his father came home. She rose to help Mr. Hart off with his coat.

"Oh, by the way," said that gentleman, when their greetings were over, "Holman told me Dick bought a turkey and all the fixings there to-day. Why was that? Didn't Aiken's bird come?"

"Why—yes!" said Mrs. Hart, in a puzzled tone. "*I* don't know what it was for."

"Is he here?" Mr. Hart asked; then called: "Hey! Dick!"

Dick opened his door upstairs. "What?" he growled.

"Who was it you were buying a turkey for, Dick?" his father asked.

Mr. and Mrs. Hart looked up to the darkened upper hall, but Dick did not appear at the banisters. Presently—the pause was curious—the boy answered slowly:

"Oh—I was just doing an errand for Mrs. Thompson. She forgot to do hers—till to-day—to do her shopping."

They heard his door close.

"That sounds funny!" Mr. Hart remarked

after a minute. "Suppose you call up Mrs. Thompson and ask her about it."

Dick's mother smiled and stepped to the telephone.

She had just finished talking to Mrs. Thompson when the bell rang again. She answered, and spoke softly for a moment before she rejoined her husband in the living-room. There were happy tears in her eyes.

"Mrs. Attson just called up," she said gently. "She wanted to thank us. Some one left a Thanksgiving basket at their door to-day—to-night. Mrs. Hughes, across the road, saw the boy. It was Dickie. Mrs. Attson thought we had sent him with it."

Mr. Hart's eyes widened ludicrously. "Great fishes!" he cried. "But—where did that boy get the money?"

Mrs. Hart told him, then, of the little hoard Dick had said was "gone."

"The—darned little scamp!" Mr. Hart exclaimed. "Telling you a lie like that. Huh!"

"Not exactly," declared Mrs. Hart. "And he really *did* do a small errand at Holman's for Mrs. Thompson, she told me."

Thereafter they sat for a little space, staring into the fire. And then Mr. Hart rose suddenly and went to the telephone in the hall. "Telegraph—office," he directed the operator.

When Dick came down to supper, his parents smiled at him knowingly. He looked—and felt—sheepish; and he felt more so when, without preamble, his father said, in what he evidently intended to be an offhand manner:

"By the way, Dick—thought you might want to have some fun with this snow. So I telegraphed to Chicago just now. They're to send the best pair of snow-shoes in town—by express. Be here by Saturday."

Dick looked at his father, and then he looked at his mother. Mr. Hart coughed gruffly. His mother smiled happily through her tears. Dick choked, and grinned; his eyes were glowing—and wet.

"Huh—thanks, Dad!" he said.

MIRANDY ON THANKSGIVING *

Dorothy Dix

"Well, Sis Mirandy," says Hannah Jane to me dis mawnin', "I sees dat de President is done appinted anodder Thanksgivin' Day, dough how he has got de nerve to do hit wid po'k chops a-soarin' lak dey had wings to 'em, an' chicken dat high you's ashamed to look a hen in de face, beats me."

"Well, Sis Hannah Jane," 'spons I, "from what I can heah 'bout what his kind friends is sayin' 'bout him, an' is done done to him, an' wid all of dese heah Bull Mooses turned loose on him, maybe de President don't feel dat he's got no call to appint a Thanksgivin' Day on his own account, nuther. Howsomever, dat ain't got nothin' to do wid de whareforeness of Thanksgivin' Day. Dat's de law."

"Humph," grumbles Sis Hannah Jane, "I don't see nothin' in de law to make you thankful. All hit does is jes' to step on yo' toes, an' keep you from doin' de things you wants to do."

* By permission of the author and of "Good Housekeeping."

"Sis Hannah Jane," says I, "you ain't got de right light on dat question. De reason dat de law sets aside one day in de year for us to be thankful in, whedder we'se got anything to be thankful for or not, is dat ef we didn't have to be thankful by law, dere wouldn't none of us be thankful at all. We'se all of us so busy ponderin' on our misfortunes, dat we ain't got time to count up our blessin's.

"Hit's a funny thing, Sis Hannah Jane," I goes on, "dat de onliest things that happens to us dat we notices is de onpleasant things. We'se all got a long memory for our hard luck, an' a good forgetter for our good luck. When de year is over, all de days dat we can recall is dem when hit rained, or stormed on wash-day.

"Did you ever listen to dem Oldest Inhabitants talk? Dey always tells you 'bout de coldest day in January, or de hottest day in July, or de spring when dey had a flood, or de fall when dere was a drought, but you don't never heah dem prognosticatin' none 'bout dem Mays when hit warn't nuther too hot nor too cold, nor too wet nor too dry, but jest edzac'ly right. An' dat's de way hit is 'bout life. Our troubles sticks in our recollections lak burs in a dog's tail, but our blessin's slides off of our mem'ries lak water off of a duck's back.

"An' dere's anodder curious thing 'bout

folks, Sis Hannah Jane, an' dat is dat when we wants to kind of take stock of how things is gwine wid us we don't never look down, but always looks up. We don't measure ourselves aginst dem what is po', an' sickly, an' onfortunate, but aginst dem what is rich, an' strong, an' prosperous. Dat's why we find it so hard to git a foothold on de grateful platform, an' why our blessin' has got such a measly, shrunk look to 'em dat dey don't seem worth takin' a day off to celebrate.

"Ev'ytime I sagasuates down de street I meets up wid some woman what backs me up into a sto' do' whilst she tells me 'bout what po' health she enjoys, an' how she's got a misery in her back, an' de rheumatics in her laigs, an' a gone feelin' in de pit of her stomach, an' how de doctor prognosticates as how she's got de chronics. But none of dese heah able-bodied women, dat ain't got a ache or a pain in deir whole circumference, an' what can do a day's washin', an' den go to a ball an' dance all night, don't stop me none to tell me how dey is dest sloshin' over wid health, an' how good hit is to be well, an' strong, an' able to spend yo' money on eatin' an' good clothes, instid of payin' hit out to de doctor an' de druggist.

"An' 'bout fo' evenin's a week some sister camps in my parlor rockin'-cheer, an' sprinkles my best rug wid her tears whilst she tells me

how she is married to a man dat spends his money an' his time a chasin' after some odder woman, an' who comes home drunk an' beats her, an' breaks up de furniture dat she's done gone out scrubbin' to buy. But ef any of de ladies in my acquaintance is ever tooken up any of my time a braggin' 'bout how dey is married to a man dat wuks lak a dray-hoss to suppo't 'em so dat dey can have time to traipse 'roun 'an gossip wid de neighbors, an' who gits up of nights an' walks de baby wid de colic, an' don't hand 'em no back talk when dey gits riled, den I disremembers de occasion.

"Lakwise I don't heah nothin' from de parients dat is got chillun dat wuks an' suppo'ts 'em; but, my Lawd! de howl dat goes up from dem fathers an' mothers what is got boys an' gals dat don't let 'em boss 'em!

"Which is what makes me say what I do, dat we takes our blessin's as no mo' dan our due dat we ain't got no call to be thankful for, seein' as how dey ain't never come up to our expectations no way, but we lets out a mighty squeal when any little thing goes wrong wid us.

"Yit we'se all got a plenty to be grateful for, even ef hit ain't nothin' but not bein' no worse off dan we is. Yassum, dat's Gord's truth, an'

dat's what I was tellin' Sis Sairry Sue dis ve'y day when she was a-moanin' an' a-groanin' 'bout her health, an' a-sayin' dat she specks she's got to go to de hospital an' have a operation.

"'Shoo, Sis Sairry Sue,' says I, 'but you's got a call to be celebratin' dis Thanksgivin' Day ef dat is de case, becaze to have a operation done in de hospital sets a woman up in conversation for de balance of her life. Many is de time,' says I, 'dat I is had to set silent in company, not ever havin' had my appendix removed, whilst odder ladies discoursed 'bout operations, but you'll be fixed an' can hold up yo' end wid de best of 'em.'

"An' dere's Sis Loretta, what is married to one of dese heah men whut's a good man, but ain't got no faculty for gittin' along. Dey has a mighty scuffle to live an' hit gits on Sis Loretta's nerves.

"'I lay,' says she, 'dat de President's Thanksgivin' proclamation don't hit me none, for all dat prosperity dat he talks 'bout overflowin' de country sholy has missed me, an' ef I was to comb things wid a fine-tooth comb 'roun' my house, I wouldn't find nothin' to be grateful for.'

"'Sis Loretta,' 'spons I, 'in dese days ev'y woman dat is married to a man dat ain't got

no turn for makin' money is got reason to be down on her marrow-bones a-givin' thanks to Heaven for keepin' her husband for her, for de very fust thing dat a man does dat gits rich is to buy him a ninety-hoss-power auty-mobile, an' a new wife wid a straight front figger, an' yeller hair, to match his new furniture in his new house.

"'Now dest as long as yo' Jeems Henry has to come to you for a nickel for his tobacco, he is yours, an' you ain't nowise in no danger of losin' him, nor of any lady husband-snatcher takin' him away from you, for dey ain't after no man dat ain't got de money-makin' habit. But ef he was to git to be a millionaire, lak dese heah Pittsburgh folks, de fust news you would know would be dat he was gittin' a divorsch to marry some gal dat's young enough to be his daughter.

"'I tell you, Sis Loretta,' I goes on, 'de lak of de price is de beginnin' of virtue wid a lot of men, an' dem po' wives don't know how much dey's got to be thankful for.'

"'Well, Sis Mirandy,' dey all says to me, 'we don't see why you is so set on celebratin' Thanksgivin' Day. You ain't so lucky. You is po', an' hard-worked, an' has had a mighty scramble to raise yo' fambly, an' we notices dat in yo' basket dere ain't no turkey, nor even

a chicken. Dere ain't nothin' but po'k chops. What you gwine to give thanks for?'

"'Me,' 'spons I, 'I'se gwine to give thanks dat feathers don't grow on po'k chops, so you don't have to pick 'em.'"

AN OLD-TIME THANKSGIVING *

M. Eloise Talbot

Little Prudence stood by the window, with her face pressed hard against it. She was not looking out; she could not do that, for the window-frame, instead of being filled with clear panes of glass, had oiled paper stretched tightly across it.

It was a very curious window, indeed, and it transmitted a dull light into a very curious room. The floor was of uncovered boards; the walls were built of logs of wood with the bark still clinging to them in places; and overhead were great rafters from which hung suspended many things—swords and corselets, coats, bundles of dried herbs, pots and pans.

The furniture was very simple. In the center of the room was a wooden table, scoured to whiteness, stiff-backed chairs were ranged against the wall, and a dresser, where pewter cups and platters stood in shining rows, adorned the farther corner. In a wide chimney-place a

* Reprinted from "St. Nicholas," by permission of The Century Company.

royal fire was blazing, and before it stood Prudence's mother, carefully stirring some mixture in an iron pot which hung upon a crane. Within the circle of the firelight, which played upon her yellow hair and turned it to ruddy gold, Mehitable, Prudence's sister, stepped rapidly to and fro, her spinning-wheel making a humming accompaniment to the crackling of the blaze.

Prudence turned to watch her, pushing farther back a little white cap which pressed upon her short curls; for she was a little Puritan maiden, living in the town of Plymouth, and it was not the present year of our Lord, but about two hundred and seventy-five years ago. She was a very different Prudence from what she would have been if she had been living now, and it was a very different Plymouth from the pleasant town we know to-day, with its many houses climbing up the hill, and the busy people in its streets. There were only seven houses then, and they stood in one line leading to the water, and there was but one building besides—a square wooden affair with palisades, which served as a church on Sundays, a fort when enemies were feared, and a storehouse all the time. Beyond these nothing could be seen but woods—trackless, unknown forests—and, away to the east, the ocean, where the waves were booming with a lonesome sound.

It was not quite a year before that Prudence's father had stood with the other brave colonists on the deck of the *Mayflower,* and had looked with eager eyes upon the shore of the New World. This first year in Massachusetts had on the whole been a happy one for Prudence. During the cold winter which followed their landing, she had indeed cast longing thoughts toward the home in Holland which they had left; and especially did she long for the Dutch home when she was hungry, and the provisions which had been brought on the ship were scanty; but she had forgotten all such longings in the bounty given by the summer, and now it seemed to her there was no more beautiful place in the world than this New England.

It was Prudence's father who opened the door and came in, carrying on his shoulder an ax with which he had been felling trees for the winter's fuel. Prudence never could get over the queer feeling it gave her to see her father thus employed. When they lived in Holland, he was always writing and studying in books of many languages, but here he did little else than work in the fields, for it was only so that the early settlers obtained their daily bread. He leaned his ax in a corner and came toward the fire, rubbing his hands to get out the cold.

"I have news for you, dear heart, to-night," he said to his wife. "I have just come from the granary, and indeed there is goodly store laid up of corn and rye, and game that has been shot in the forest. The children's mouths will not hunger this winter."

"Praised be the Lord!" replied his wife, fervently. "But what is your news?"

"The governor hath decided to hold a thanksgiving for the bountiful harvest, and on the appointed day is a great feast to be spread; and he hath sent a messenger to bid Massasoit to break bread with us."

"Massasoit the Indian?"

"Ay; but a friendly Indian. He will come, and many of his braves with him. You will be kept busy, my heart, with the other housewives to bake sufficient food for this company."

"Oh, Mother, may I—*may* I go?" cried Prudence, her eyes dancing with excitement, clutching at her mother's skirts; but her father continued:

"How now, Mehitable? The news of a coming feast does not seem to make you merry as it was wont to do in Holland."

Mehitable was grave, and there was even a tear in her eye.

"I know," cried Joel, who was two years older than Prudence; "she is thinking of John Andrew, who is across the sea."

But the father frowned, and the mother said, "Peace, foolish children!" as she placed the porridge on the table.

So Prudence and Joel drew up their benches, and said no more. Chairs and conversation did not belong to children in those days; they sat on little stools and kept silence. That did not keep them from thinking. A thanksgiving feast! What could it be? The only thanksgiving they knew about meant such long prayers in church that the little people grew very tired before the end. But a feast!—that would be something new and interesting.

The feast was to be held on the following Thursday; so, during all the days between, the house was full of the stir of brewing and baking. Prudence polished the apples, and Joel pounded the corn, in eager anticipation; but when the day arrived a cruel disappointment awaited them, for their father decreed that they should remain at home.

"You are over young, my little Prudence, and Joel is over bold; besides which, he must stay and care for you."

"And do neither of you leave the house while your father and I are away," added the mother. "I shall not have a moment's peace of mind if I think you are wandering outside alone."

"I will bring you back a Dutch cake, my little sister," whispered Mehitable, who looked

sweeter than ever in her best attire of black silk and a lace kerchief, which with an unwilling heart she had put on in obedience to her mother's command.

But when the elders were gone, the disappointment and loneliness were too much for the children. Prudence, being a girl, sat down in a corner and cried; while Joel, being a boy, got angry, and strode up and down the room with his hands in his pockets.

"It is too bad!" he burst out suddenly. "The greedy, grown-up people, I believe they want all the food themselves! It's a downright shame to keep us at home!"

"Joel!" gasped Prudence, horrified—"Father and Mother!"

"Well, I know," admitted Joel, more mildly; "but at least, they need not have shut us up in the house as if we were babies. Prudence, let's go out in the yard and play, if we can't do anything else."

"But Mother forbade us," said Prudence.

"I know. But then, of course, she only meant we must not go into the woods for fear of wild beasts. There is no danger here by the doorsteps, and father won't care; *he's* not afraid!"

"I—don't—know," faltered Prudence.

"Well, *I'm* going, anyway," said Joel, resolutely, taking his hat from the peg. "Ah, do come too, Prudence!" he added persuasively.

So Prudence, though she knew in her heart it was a naughty thing to do, took off her cap, and, tying her little Puritan bonnet under her chin, followed Joel through the door.

Once outside, I am afraid their scruples were soon forgotten. All the sunshine of the summer and the sparkling air of the winter were fused together to make a wonderful November day. The children felt like colts just loosed, and ran and shouted together till, if there had not been a good deal of noise also at the stone house where the feast was being spread, their shrill little voices must surely have been heard there.

All at once Joel caught Prudence by the arm.

"Hush!" he exclaimed. "Look!"

A beautiful gray squirrel ran across the grass in front of them. It stopped, poising its little head and intently listening.

"I'm going to catch him," whispered Joel, excitedly. "Father said if I could catch one, he would make me a cage for it. Come along."

He tiptoed softly forward, but the squirrel heard and was up and away in an instant. Joel pursued, and Prudence ran after him. Such a chase as the little creature gave them—up on the fence, under the stones, across the fields, and finally straight to the woods, with the children panting and stumbling after, still keeping

him in sight. Breath and patience gave out at last; but when they stopped, where were they? In the very heart of the forest, where the dead leaves rustled, and the sunlight slanted down upon them, and the squirrel, safe in the top of a tree, chattered angrily.

"Never saw—anything run—so fast," panted Joel, in disgust. "I—give—him up. We had better go back, Prudence. Why—but—I don't think I know the way!"

Prudence's lip quivered, and her eyes filled.

"That's just like a girl!" said Joel, harshly, "to go and cry the first thing."

"I don't care," cried Prudence, indignation burning away her tears; "you brought me into this, anyhow, Joel, and now you ought to get me out."

This was so obviously true that Joel had no retort at hand. Besides, he did not like to see Prudence unhappy. So after a moment, he put his arm around her.

"Never mind, Prue," he said; "I think if we try together, we can find the way home."

But though they walked until their feet were weary, they could find no familiar spot.

When they came out of the woods at last, it was only to find themselves unexpectedly on the sandy beach of the ocean. They sat down on two stones and looked at each other in silence. Joel began to feel even his bravery

giving way. All at once they heard a sound of soft feet, and a low, sweet voice said:

"How do, English!"

A little Indian boy stood before them. He wore a garment of skins, and a tiny bow and quiver hung upon his back. His feet were bare, and he walked so lightly that the children could hardly hear his tread. Prudence, in fright, shrank close to her brother; but Joel had seen many Indians during their year in the New World, and the stranger's eyes were so bright and soft that the white boy returned the Indian's salutation. Then, plunging his hand into his pocket, Joel brought forth a handful of nut-meats, and held them out for an offering.

The little Indian smiled delightedly, and politely took a few—not all. Having munched the kernels gravely, the new-comer began to dance.

It was a most remarkable dance. It was first a stately measure, accompanied by many poisings on his toes and liftings of his head, from which the wind blew back his straight black hair; but gradually his motions grew faster and more furious, his slow steps changed to running, he turned, he twisted his lithe body into all possible contorted shapes, he threw his arms high above his head, waving them wildly, he took great leaps into the air, and finally, when his dance had lasted about fifteen minutes, several amazing somersaults

brought him breathless, but still smiling, to the children's feet.

His spectators had been shouting with delight during the whole performance, and now asked him eager questions. What was his name? How did he learn to dance? Could he not speak any more English? But to all their inquiries he only shook his head, and at last sat down beside them, motionless now as any little bronze statue, and looked steadily out to sea.

Prudence's head drooped upon her brother's shoulder.

"I'm rather tired, Joel," she said, wistfully; "don't you think we could get to Plymouth pretty soon?"

"I don't know," said Joel, despondently.

At the words the Indian boy sprang to his feet. He ran toward the woods, then stopped, and beckoned them to follow.

"He is going in the wrong direction, I am sure," said Joel, shaking his head.

The boy stamped on the ground with impatience, and, running back, seized Prudence's hand, and gently pulled her forward.

"Plymout'!" he said, in his strange accent.

The children looked at each other.

"We might as well try him," said Joel.

The boy clapped his hands together, and ran on before them into the forest. It was a weary journey, over bogs and fallen trees, and seemed

three times as long as when they had come. A wasp once stung Prudence on the cheek, making her cry out with pain; but quick as thought the little Indian caught up a pellet of clay and plastered it upon the wound and, marvelous to relate, before many minutes the sharp pain had quite gone away.

The woods seemed gradually to grow a little more open, and pretty soon they heard the distant tinkle of a cow-bell. At last (Prudence held her breath for fear it might not be true) they emerged suddenly into the clearing, and home lay before them.

They found they had made a complete circle since they started.

Their little guide stooped and picked up a gaudy-colored feather from the ground. He examined it closely, and then he shouted aloud and began to run toward the storehouse as fast as his sturdy legs could carry him.

"I want to see Mother," said Prudence, half crying with fatigue; so they ran all together across the clearing.

All this while the feast had been progressing. About noontime the great Massasoit, chief of the Indian tribe called the Wampanoags, had emerged from the forest with all his tallest braves in single file behind him. They wore their best beaver-skins, and their heads were gay with nodding feathers. They were received

at the door of the storehouse by their English entertainers, who also wore the bravest attire that Puritan custom allowed. They gave the braves a hearty welcome.

Within, the long table fairly groaned with abundance of good cheer; for the housewives had vied with one another to provide the fattest game and the daintiest dishes that Dutch or English housewifery had taught them.

After asking a blessing, they all sat down, the stalwart colonists and their fair-haired women side by side with the taciturn Indians. The white men felt that the best way to thank God for the harvest was to share it with their dark-skinned brethren, who had first taught them to plant and raise the maize which now furnished the table.

Governor Bradford sat the head of the table. He hoped much from this feast; first, that it might cement the friendship between the colonists and their Indian neighbors, the Wampanoags; and, second, that the news of it might induce the neighboring tribes, which were still partly hostile, to live in peace with the settlers. But though food and talk passed blithely round among the other guests, the governor saw, with growing dismay, that the great Massasoit sat frowning and depressed. The governor was not long in learning the cause. The interpreter, observing the governor's uneasiness, whispered in

his ear that in a recent war with the Narragansets, Massasoit's only child, a boy, was missed and was thought to have been taken prisoner, and of course put to death, after the cruel savage custom.

Toward the end of the feast, drink was served to every guest. For the first time Massasoit showed animation. He seized his cup, and lifted it in the air, and cried aloud in his native tongue, as he sprang to his feet:

"May plague and famine seize the Narragansets!"

At that very moment the house door opened, and a pretty group appeared upon the threshold. Two English children stood there, as fair and rosy as the May-time, and between them a dark, lithe little Indian, with sparkling eyes.

Prudence ran straight to her mother.

Massasoit paused and trembled; then, as his cup fell and shivered upon the ground, he crossed the room in one stride and caught the Indian boy in his arms, looking at him as if he could never see enough.

Governor Bradford knew in an instant that the lost child had been restored, even without the Indian warriors' shout of triumph and Massasoit's passionate exclamation: "Light of my eyes—staff of my footsteps!—thou art come back to me—the warmth of my heart, the sunlight of my wigwam!"

The rejoicing was so great that no one thought of chiding Joel and Prudence for their disobedience. The governor himself gave Joel a large slice of pudding, and Prudence told all her adventures, throned upon her father's knee, wearing around her neck a string of wampum which the grateful Massasoit had hung there.

"And, oh!" she exclaimed, "while the Indian boy was dancing for Joel and me, I looked out to sea, and I saw such a wonderful bird—a great white bird, flying along close to the water, and rising up and down. It was many times greater than the swans in Amsterdam!"

"Was it, my little maid?" said the good governor, laying his hand on her head, and then he exchanged a keen look with Prudence's father, saying nothing more. But when the guests had departed, bearing home the Indian boy in triumph, none was so early as the governor to reach the seashore; and it was his call that brought the colonists to see the good ship *Fortune* (Prudence's "great white bird") already rounding the point and making ready to cast anchor in Plymouth harbor.

Ah, then indeed the great guns rang out from the shore to hail the ship, and the ship's cannon boomed a quick reply, and the whole little town was full and running over with glad welcome for the second English vessel to land upon our Massachusetts coast.

In the evening a happy circle gathered round the fire in the house of Prudence's father, and there was eager talk, for all had much to learn and tell.

"I know now," said Joel to Prudence, as they sat side by side, "I know now what Thanksgiving means. It means plenty to eat."

Prudence looked at the dear faces around her, at Mehitable's sweet smile, and at the shining eyes of John Andrews, for he had been a passenger by the *Fortune*.

"Perhaps," she replied; "but I think, Joel, that we have Thanksgiving because we are so glad to be all together once more."

This first Thanksgiving happened long ago, but out of it, all our later ones have grown; and when we think of the glad meetings of long-parted parents and sons and daughters, of the merry frolics with brothers and sisters and cousins, which come upon Thanksgiving Day, in spite of our bountiful dinner-tables we shall agree with Prudence that it is the happy family party which makes the pleasure, after all.

THE WIDENED HEARTH *

Fannie Kilbourne

"Wouldn't you think they would be invited *somewhere?*" Kathleen demanded. "Wouldn't you think even boarders would like to go out to dinner on *Thanksgiving?*"

"Couldn't we tell them that we don't serve meals on holidays?" Lois suggested.

Their mother shook her head. "It's never done. All boarding-houses have a big dinner on holidays."

"Oh, Mother," Lois protested, "please don't call this a boarding-house! Having four—four paying guests doesn't make a place a boarding-house."

"That which we call a rose—" Kathleen quoted lightly.

"Whatever you call it," their practical mother said, "it seems to bring its responsibilities."

"It isn't fair that being poor should keep us from having a home," said Lois. "It's bad

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enough, having all the extra work, but it's having the boarders around all the time that I mind. Home isn't home when it's full of strangers."

"It's bad enough to have boarders any time," Kathleen took up the plaint, "but it does seem as if they might go away on holidays!"

Their four "paying guests" had been with the Martins for three months. Taking them had seemed the inevitable sequel to the Consolidated failure. During the long years of Mrs. Martin's widowhood, the check from the Consolidated had been one of the rocks of assurance on which her life was built.

Then the Consolidated failed, and the check stopped coming. It all happened with a suddenness and unexpectedness that stunned the Martins. For days Mrs. Martin was more bewildered and incredulous than she was frightened. But the fright followed soon enough. Never could she forget the terror of the hot July evening when she had finally accepted the fact that the Consolidated check would come no more, and had taken account of her resources.

There was "home," an attractive ten-room stone house. Chestnut Avenue had been on the outskirts of town when Mrs. Martin had gone to the stone house as a bride twenty years ago. During the twenty years the city had slowly

crept up, a store building here, an apartment-house there. Electric cars thundered up and down the next block, hotels and bakeries appeared on the cross-streets; the neighborhood was only a few minutes' walk from the busiest part of the city—yet Chestnut Avenue stood alone, a shady, restful island of homes in the restless sea of traffic.

Besides home, the assets were few; the tiny income that was still coming would scarcely pay the coal bill and the taxes. Then there were the girls, Lois, aged seventeen, Kathleen, aged fifteen, still in high school, two lovable liabilities. Home was in a desirable part of the town, near business yet quiet. "Paying guests" offered the only solution to the problem.

"Well, if we've sunk to where we have to take boarders, we'll take them," Lois had said grimly. "We'll give them comfortable rooms and good food, but we won't—"

"Won't be clubby with them," Kathleen suggested slangily.

"No, we won't," Lois agreed. "They'll have their own lives, and we'll have ours. We won't let their being here spoil our home life."

The four boarders had been able to pay good prices for their large sunny rooms and appetizing meals; they knew nothing of the planning and penny-pinching behind the fruit salad. The Martins kept to themselves as much as

possible, striving to maintain their means of livelihood on a formal, businesslike basis.

"We could fool ourselves all right before," Lois went on almost tearfully, "pretending keeping boarders didn't make any difference. But on holidays it shows up. We can't have people we'd like here for dinner with four strangers, and we can't go anywhere ourselves because we have to stay and get dinner for them."

"I thought surely Miss Dunn would be invited somewhere," Kathleen said. "Didn't you, Mother?"

"She expected to go home," Mrs. Martin explained, "and then, just last week, the schools decided to keep open Friday, so she can't go."

"I heard her refuse an invitation over the telephone just before she found out," said Lois.

"I suppose we ought to have a turkey," said Mrs. Martin, "And turkey is fifty-five cents a pound. I wonder if we'll have to have soup?"

"We had five courses last year," Lois reminded them wistfully. "We won't have to bother with cheese crackers and candied orange-peel and things like that this year, anyway. Isn't it funny how much more work it seems to be to get up a dinner for people you don't want than for people you do. I never think of the trouble of clearing up after a party, but the idea of washing the dishes after this

dinner— Well, I just wish Thanksgiving were over!''

''Girls!'' cried Kathleen, suddenly straightening up and looking from one to the other with bright eyes. Kathleen always addressed her mother and sister in that collective way, which secretly delighted her quiet, practical mother. ''Girls, let's make it a party. As long as we've lost our home anyway, let's get some fun out of it. Let's pretend we're giving a dinner-party and have place-cards and flowers and—well, maybe not flowers, but everything that is spiffy and cheap and—''

She paused enthusiastically, but her enthusiasm was not reflected in the faces of the other two.

''Getting up a big dinner is about all the work I want,'' said her mother.

''Oh, we'll do all the party part of it, won't we, Lois?'' said Kathleen. ''Oh, come on; it would be lots of fun. We haven't had a party since the Consolidated failed. Come on, please! It would be great fun!''

''I suppose I could paint the place-cards myself,'' said Lois.

''We could send them invitations,'' Kathleen went on eagerly. ''Of course they'd come anyhow, but it would let them know that it was a party. We—''

''We'll use the gorgeous stationery Aunt

Kate gave me for my birthday," said Lois.

"We can have alligator-pear salad," said Mrs. Martin, "if Uncle Will's box from Florida gets here in time. That is always considered quite a delicacy."

"We'll have a fire in the grate," said Lois.

"And serve the coffee in front of it!" said Kathleen, suddenly inspired.

Enthusiasm had begun its leavening, already Thanksgiving dinner had begun to be a "party."

Tuesday evening a large square envelope lay at each boarder's place.

"Mrs. Anne Upland Martin and her daughters, Miss Lois and Miss Kathleen Martin, would be pleased to have you take dinner with them at two o'clock Thanksgiving Day and spend the afternoon, if there is nothing else that you want to do."

The message was of Kathleen's composing and was written in Lois's pretty hand. The four boarders read the missives through and then looked up.

"Well, I'll be tickled to death," said pretty little Miss Dunn. "I was so disappointed about not being able to go home that I had decided to stay in my room and cry all day."

"You can count on me," said Mr. Willis. He worked on the "Tribune" and had planned to hurry away after dinner and attend the foot-

ball game with two or three other young newspaper men. But for the last month or so it had been growing upon Mr. Willis just how pretty and sweet little Miss Dunn was, and this seemed a splendid chance to get better acquainted with her.

"Well, I haven't anywhere else to go, so I guess *I'll* be here all right," said Miss Dempsey. Plain, blunt, middle-aged Miss Dempsey was secretary in one of the flour-mills.

"It's most kind of you to ask me," said the fourth boarder, with the slow, gentle courtesy that fitted so well with his white hair and frock-coat, "but I am afraid that—unless—" He hesitated. "My nephew is to be in town for Thanksgiving Day—I just received word this morning, and—I wonder if it would be a great imposition—"

"We'd be glad to have him come, too," Mrs. Martin said cordially.

Mr. Thompson beamed.

"He would be happy to come," he said.

"Kathleen," her mother protested when the three Martins were in the kitchen, washing the dinner dishes, "I wish you had let me see those invitations first. What on earth did you ask them all to spend the afternoon for? It was all right to make the dinner a party, but an ill-assorted group like that will be as restless as witches before the day is over."

"Why, Mother!" Kathleen's dish-towel paused reproachfully in mid air. "Who ever heard of people's leaving a party the minute dinner is over! They're not a bit more ill-assorted than most of our family parties."

"Besides," said Lois, coming to her sister's support, "we said, 'if there is nothing else that you want to do.' If they think they're going to be bored, they needn't stay."

"Well, there's no helping it now, anyway," said Mrs. Martin, philosophically. She paused a moment. "I wonder what Mr. Thompson's nephew is like."

"I'll bet he's a fashionable young bachelor," said Lois. "Mr. Thompson has quite a lot of money and—"

"I'll bet he wears spats," was Kathleen's contribution. "I'm glad that we thought of having coffee in front of the fire. He'll see that we're not so slow ourselves."

Thanksgiving breakfast was a light, hasty meal.

"We wouldn't eat anything, anyhow," said Mr. Willis. "We don't want to cramp our style for dinner."

The party was bringing an element of personality into the pleasant formality that had been the atmosphere of the house.

"Oh, I *hope* it will snow!" said Kathleen,

scanning the cloudy sky. "It would seem so much more Thanksgiving-y."

"We nearly always had sleighing for Thanksgiving at home in New Hampshire," said Miss Dempsey.

After breakfast Mr. Willis departed for the office. Mr. Thompson left for the station to meet his nephew, and the two women went upstairs to their rooms. Then the folding doors between the dining-room and the living-room were closed, and from that time on in the back part of the house preparations ruled supreme.

Mrs. Martin moved briskly from table to refrigerator, from sink to stove. At ten o'clock she put the turkey into the oven. Lois deftly made butter-balls, washed lettuce, and chopped nuts. But it was Kathleen that kept the spirit of the party.

"Oh, girls! Look!" she called, watching with rapt eyes the few feathery flakes that were sifting down upon the hard brown ground. "There!" she said. "Now just come and see if this table doesn't look lovely."

At either end, hollowed pumpkins were filled with shining apples and oranges, grapes and bananas. The place-cards, yellow chrysanthemums painted by Lois, waved from the tops of the tall slender glasses. And scattered about the table in holders of cardboard and gilded

walnut-shells were dozens of little candles waiting to be lighted.

"Why, Kathie, it's lovely!"

"And cheap!" Kathleen said eagerly. "It didn't cost a penny except for the candles. The walnut-shells come from the nuts in the mince-meat; the pumpkins the boarders will eat later in pies that Mother will make of them."

"Mother," she protested later in the day, "you're not going to wear *that* dress! Why, don't you know, Mother, this is a *party!*"

Just at noon the door-bell rang, causing great excitement. It proved to be a box of flowers from one of Miss Dunn's admirers.

"Girls, look at these!" said Kathleen, coming back to the kitchen with her arms full of American Beauties. "Miss Dunn says we can have them for the dining-room." She placed the two tall vases on the buffet. "There! That gives the whole thing tone. The nephew with the spats will give one glance at those, and he'll know this is no husking-bee."

A little before two o'clock the nephew arrived. Lois was the first to see him. She clutched Kathleen, and the two peered through the crack in the double door. He was a tall, awkward, freckled-faced boy of sixteen or so. The girls stared for a moment, then retreated to the kitchen for a hysterical outburst.

"A fashionable bachelor!" gasped Lois.

"Did you notice any sp-spats?" said Kathleen.

At quarter past two the dining-room curtains were drawn, the three dozen little yellow candles lighted, and the doors flung open. There was a delighted gasp from the five guests.

It was a most successful party. The boarders had put on their holiday moods with their holiday clothes. In a soft blue silk dress, Miss Dempsey did not seem half so much the brusque, reserved business-woman. And little Miss Dunn, in her straight black velvet dress with its lace collar, with her wide blue eyes, and her yellow hair curling softly against her creamy neck, made a picture from which Mr. Willis could hardly take his eyes. He told funny stories of newspaper life and bandied jokes with Mr. Thompson with a geniality that would have made any party "go." Mr. Thompson watched Bobby Smith at first, eager for his sister's boy to have a good time and appear to advantage. He soon dropped all responsibility there, however, when he found him stealing almonds from Kathleen's cup and telling Lois about a football game.

They were the same people, with one exception, that gathered at the same table twice a day, yet there was a difference. Instead of a businesslike boarding-house dinner prepared for pay, was the gracious atmosphere of a

feast prepared for love. It showed in Mrs. Martin's "best" dress, that gracious spirit, in the alligator-pear salad, and in the candied orange-peel; it twinkled in the tiny yellow candles and chuckled in the silly little conundrums written on the backs of the place-cards. It was the spirit of hospitality that brings forth its best for guests.

When they had eaten the last bit of mince-pie, and the last little candle had flickered out, it was after four o'clock, and, according to plan, they all went into the living-room to drink their coffee round the snapping wood fire.

"I'm glad we saved all these berry boxes from canning time," said Kathleen, putting on another armful. "They burn up in a minute, but don't they make the most thrilling fire?"

The feathery snowflakes had changed to a cold autumn rain that blew against the windows. Twilight fell early; the firelight flickered, leaving shadowy corners in the living-room. After a bit, words came fitfully; there were little periods of silence.

Kathleen, in her place on the floor beside the fire, ceased poking idly at the wood. Sensitive, responsive, she had caught the strange, wistful solemnity that so often steals down on holiday evenings. She leaned back against her mother's knee.

"It seems sort of—sort of ghostly, doesn't it?" she said in a hushed tone.

Then the ghosts stole in, the ghosts of other and different Thanksgivings.

"How well I remember the first Thanksgiving after we came West," said Mr. Thompson. "It was the year after the Indian trouble. Minneapolis was St. Anthony Falls then."

It was a story of pioneer days that he told, of raw country, of hardships and successes. Then Miss Dunn told of the first year that she had taught school in the New Hampshire hills and of their having been snowed in the day before Thanksgiving and having to stay until Friday morning with nothing to eat but what was left in the children's luncheon baskets. Mrs. Martin told of a Thanksgiving when, as a bride and fledgling housekeeper, she had had to entertain wealthy friends of her husband's.

When the clock struck eight, it was like a signal summoning them from the past. Miss Dunn straightened up suddenly.

"Please, Mrs. Martin," she said, "we've recovered from our feasting. Please let us all help do the dishes."

"Oh, no, we'll do them after—" Mrs. Martin began.

"After we've gone home, you were going to say," Miss Dunn accused her. "But we're al-

ready at home, you see; so there's no chance of our going. Please!"

Mr. Willis was already on his way to the dining-room.

"This is a heaven-sent opportunity," he said. "I've always wondered whether all this newfangled domestic science amounted to anything. We have a domestic-science teacher at our mercy, and we'll see if she really knows how to wash dishes."

The Martin kitchen that night was a hilarious place. At the sink, Mr. Willis, with a gingham apron tied about his neck, washed dishes. Kathleen presided over another pan on the table; Lois and Bobby Smith raced to see who should wipe each plate and cup as it came from the hot rinsing water. Miss Dunn wiped the dishes that Mr. Willis washed, and, judging from her occasional laughter and blushes, acquaintance was progressing quite as fast as work. There was much rivalry between the two teams, much good-natured bandying back and forth that ended with Mr. Willis's seizing Lois and depositing her high and dry upon the top of the refrigerator, where he left her until he and Miss Dunn had caught up with the rival team.

At last they all went back to the living-room for a little music. Miss Dunn played, and Lois and Kathleen went out to the cabinet in the

hall in search of some old books of music. They stole a moment for congratulations. Kathleen seized her sister about the waist.

"Honestly, hasn't this been the nicest holiday party we've ever had!"

"Everybody has been so nice," said Lois. "Wasn't it dandy of Mr. Thompson to invite us all to the theater to-morrow night in honor of his nephew? I haven't been to the theater in a decent seat since the Consodidated failed."

"They were all so nice," said Kathleen. "The idea of Miss Dunn's saying she'd just love to help me make over my pink dress! I like even Miss Dempsey. Do you know," she went on eagerly, "I believe it was because we were pretending we really wanted them here that they seemed so nice. We didn't keep kind of—kind of resenting them all the time."

"But the funny part is," Lois admitted in a whisper, "it wasn't pretending at all after the first. Why, when we were all fooling in the kitchen, I suddenly thought how glad I was that it wasn't going to end like most parties,—everybody go home and it's over with a bang,—that they'd all be here for breakfast in the morning and for dinner to-morrow night and right on."

"I know it," said Kathleen, eagerly. "Of course, it's a lot more work, and home isn't

the same, but I think it's going to be real fun having them here."

"They probably won't always seem quite so nice as they do to-night," said Lois, sagely; "they're at their best to-day. But then—"

There was a little pause in the music; then from the living-room came soft, familiar notes:

"Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

One voice after another took up the old tune, Mr. Thompson's a bit quavery, Miss Dempsey's a bit off the key.

In the shadowy hall Kathleen's arm tightened round her sister. Where the light from the living-room fell, she could see the rug over which they had all walked so many happy days, the corner of the case where their favorite books were kept; she knew what was in the shadowy corners—the hat-rack with their mother's coat and umbrella, the clock that had ticked so loud in the stillness the night their father died, the window-seat where their mother stopped to wave good-by to them when they started off for school. It all seemed suddenly, poignantly sweet. Perhaps some Thanksgiving—

The plaintive melody went on. Kathleen's eyes suddenly filled with impulsive tears.

"Think of their singing that anywhere but home!" she said, with her voice choking a little.

"I know it," said Lois. "I was just thinking that, too. I'm—oh, I don't care if the Consolidated did fail—I'm so glad we've got the house and each other!"

"And honestly," said Kathleen, laughing shakily, "I'm thankful that we've got the boarders. If we can somehow manage to make it seem like home to them, too—"

The last flicker had died out in the fireplace; the little, old-fashioned grate with its narrow hearth-stone was black and dead. But the spirit that kindles all home fires was burning bright. And in the magic of that Thanksgiving night the hearth where only three had gathered had suddenly grown wide.

JARLEY'S THANKSGIVING *

John Kendrick Bangs

JARLEY was in a blue mood the night before Thanksgiving. Things hadn't gone quite to suit him during the year. He had lost two of his most profitable clients—men upon whom for two years previously he had been able to count for a steady income. It is true that he had lost them by winning their respective suits, and had made two strong friends by so doing; but, as he once put it to Mrs. Jarley, the worst position a man could possibly get himself into was that of one who is long on friends and short on income. He did not underestimate the value of friends, but he didn't want too many of them; because, beyond a certain number, they became luxuries rather than necessities, and his financial condition was such that he could not afford luxuries.

"I love them all," he said, "but I haven't money enough to entertain a quarter of them. The last time Billie Hicks was up here he

* From "Booming of Acre Hill," by John Kendrick Bangs. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, Publishers.

smoked sixteen Invincible cigars. Now, I am very fond of Billie Hicks, but with cigars at twenty cents apiece, I can't afford him more than one Sunday a year. He's getting a little cold because I haven't asked him up since."

"Why don't you buy cheaper cigars? At our grocery store they have some very nice-looking ones at two for five cents," suggested Mrs. Jarley.

"I don't wish to have to move out of the house," said Jarley.

Mrs. Jarley failed to see the connection.

"Very likely you don't," said Jarley; "but if I smoked one of your two-and-a-half-cent grocery cigars in this house, you'd see the point in a minute. If you will get me a yard of cotton cloth and let me put it in the furnace fire, you'll get a fair idea of the kind of atmosphere we'd be breathing if I allowed a cigar like that to be lit within fifty feet of the front door."

"But you can get a good cigar for ten cents, can't you?" Mrs. Jarley asked.

"Yes—very good," assented Jarley; "but Billie would probably smoke thirty-two of those, and carry three or four away with him in his pockets. I'd lose even more that way. It's a singular thing about friends. They have some conscience about Invincible cigars, but they'll take others by the handful."

Jarley was also somewhat blue upon this occasion because none of his inventions—the little things he thought out in his leisure moments, and out of some of which he had hoped to gain a deal of profit—had been successful. The public had refused to place any confidence whatsoever in his patent reversible spats, which, when turned inside out, could be made useful as galoshes; and the beaux of New York actually rejected with scorn the celluloid chrysanthemum, which he had hoped would become a popular boutonnière because of its durability and cheapness. An impecunious young man, with care, could make one fifteen-cent chrysanthemum of the Jarley order last through a whole season, and it could be colored to suit the wearer's taste with the ordinary paint-boxes that children so delight in; but in spite of this, the celluloid chrysanthemum was a distinct failure, and Jarley had had his trouble for his pains, to say nothing of the cost of the model. But worst of all the failures, because of the prospective losses its failure entailed, was the Jarley safety lightning razor. Its failure was not due to any lack of merit, for it certainly possessed much that was ingenious and commendable. The affair was not different in principle from a lawn-mower. Six little sharp blades set on a cylinder would revolve rapidly

as the pretty machine was pushed up and down the cheek of the person, making it as smooth as a piece of velvet; but in announcing it to the world, its inventor had made the unfortunate statement that a child could use it with impunity, and some would-be smart person on a comic paper took it up and wrote an undeniably clever article on the futility of inventing a razor for children. The consequence was that the safety-razor was laughed out of existence, and the additions to his residence which Jarley was going to pay for out of the proceeds had to be abandoned.

"I don't like a blue funk," he said, "and generally I can find something to be thankful for at this season; but I'm blest if this year, beyond the fact that we're all alive, I can see any cause for celebrating my thankfulness. I haven't enough of it to last ten minutes, much less a day, what with the positive failure of my inventions, the loss of income from what I once considered safe investments that have gone to the wall, and the reduction of my professional earnings, not to mention the fact that almost at the beginning of my professional year I am as tired physically and mentally as I ought to be at the finish."

"Oh, well, say you are thankful, anyhow," suggested Mrs. Jarley. "You will convince

others that you are, and maybe, if you say it often enough, you will convince yourself of the fact."

"Thanks," said Jarley. "It's possibly a good suggestion, but I don't believe in pretending to be what I'm not. It might convince me that I am thankful for something, but I don't want to be convinced when I know I'm not."

Which shows, I think, how very blue Jarley was.

"There's one thing," he added, with a sigh of relief at the thought, "I'll have a day of rest to-morrow anyhow. I've bought Jack a football, and he can take it out on the tennis-court and play with it all day, with intervals for meals."

"Why did you do that?" asked Mrs. Jarley, with a gesture not so much of indignation as of disapproval. "I think football is such a brutal game; and if Jack has a football at his present age, when he's in college he'll want to play. I don't want to have my boy wearing his hair like a Comanche Indian, and coming home with broken ribs and dislocated limbs."

"We'll let the broken ribs of 1904 and the wig of the same period suffice for the evils of that year," retorted Jarley. "It's the present I'm looking after, not the future ten or twelve years removed. If Jack hasn't that football to-morrow, he'll have me, and I've no desire in

the present condition of my physical well-being to be used by him as a plaything. Deprived of the leathern ball, he might use me as a football instead, and I must rest. That's all there is about it. Besides, if he becomes an aspirant for football honors now, it will be a good thing for him. He'll take care of himself and try to improve his physique if he once gets the notion in his head that he wants to go on a university eleven. I want my boy to learn to be a man, and the football ambition is likely to be a very useful aid in that direction. He knits reins very well with a spool and a pin now, and I think it's time he graduated in that art, unless the woman of the future, of whom we hear so much, is to take man's place to such an extent that the man will have to take up woman's work. If I thought the masculine tendency of our present-day girls was likely to go much further, I might consent to the effemination of Jack simply to secure his comfort as a married man of the future; but I don't think that, and in consequence Jack is going to be brought up as a boy, and not as a girl. The football goes."

This remark was another indication of Jarley's depression. He rarely combated Mrs. Jarley's ideas, and when he did, and with a certain air of irritation, it was invariably a sign of his low mental state.

"When you say that the football goes, do you mean that it stays?" queried Mrs. Jarley, who was a little tired herself, and could not, therefore, resist the temptation to indulge in a bit of innocent repartee.

"I do," said Jarley, shortly. "Goes is sometimes a synonym for stays? When I feel stronger I may invent a new language, which will have fewer absurdities than English as she is spoke."

And with this Jarley went to bed, and slept the sleep of the just man who is truly weary.

If he had forseen the result of his football investment, it is doubtful if his sleep would have been so tranquil—unless, perchance, he were fashioned after that rare pattern of mankind, Louis XVI of France, who called for his six- or seven-course dinner with a mob of howling, bloodthirsty Parisians in his antechamber, and who on the eve of his execution slept well, despite his knowledge that within fifteen hours his head would in all probability be lopped off by the guillotine to gratify the lust for blood which was the chief characteristic of the promoters of the first French Republic.

At six on the morning of Thanksgiving Day Jarley was sleeping peacefully, but the youthful Jack was not. Thanksgiving Day was not a holiday in his eyes, but a day set apart for work, thanks to his father's indulgence in pro-

viding him with a football. He had gone to bed the night before with the ball hugged tightly to his breast; and along about ten o'clock, when Jarley himself had gone into the nursery to put that treasured good-night kiss upon the forehead of his sleeping boy, tired as he was and blue as he was, he had difficulty in repressing the laughter that manifested itself within him, for Jack lay prone, face upward, with the football under the small of his back, and seemingly as comfortable as though he were resting upon eider-down.

"That is certainly a characteristic football attitude," Jarley said, when Mrs. Jarley had come to see what had caused her husband's chuckle.

"Yes—and so good for the spine!" returned Mrs. Jarley.

The attitude was changed, but the ball was left where Jack would see it the first thing on awaking in the morning. At six, as I have said, Jarley was sleeping peacefully, but Jack was not. He had opened his eyes some minutes before, and on catching sight of his treasured football, he began to grin. The grin grew wider and wider, until apparently it got too wide for the bed, and the boy leaped out of his couch upon the floor. The first thing he did was to pat the ball gently but firmly, very much as a kitten manifests its interest in a ball of yarn.

Then his attentions to his new plaything grew more pronounced and vigorous, and within fifteen minutes it had been chased out of the nursery into the parental bedchamber. Still Jarley slept. Mrs. Jarley was merely half asleep. She tried to tell Jack to be quiet; but she was not quite wide awake enough to do so as forcibly as was necessary, and the result was that instead of abating his ardor, Jack plunged into his sport more vigorously than ever.

And then Jarley was awakened—and what an awakening it was! Not one of those peaceful comings-to that betoken the tranquil mind after a good rest, but a return to consciousness with every warlike tendency in his being aroused to the highest pitch. Jack had passed the ball with considerable momentum on to the mantelpiece, which sent it backward on the rebound to no less a feature than the nose of the slumbering Jarley.

"What the deuce was that?" cried Jarley, sitting up straight in bed. He had forgotten all about the football, and to his suddenly restored consciousness it seemed as if the ceiling must have fallen. Then he rubbed his nose, which still ached from the force of the impact between itself and the ball.

"It was the ball did it, Papa," said Jack, meekly. " 'Twasn't me."

In an instant Jarley was on the floor; and

Jack, scenting trouble, incontinently fled. The parent was angry from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, but as the soles of his feet touched the floor his anger abated. After all, Jack hadn't meant to hurt him, and having witnessed several games of football, he knew how innately perverse an oval-shaped affair like the ball itself could be. Furthermore, there was Mrs. Jarley, who had disapproved of his purchase from the outset. If he wreaked vengeance upon poor little Jack for his unwitting offense, Jarley knew that he would in a measure weaken his position in the argument of the night before. So, instead of chastising Jack, as he really felt inclined to do, he picked up the ball, and repairing to the nursery, summoned the boy to him in his sweetest tones.

"Never mind, old chap," he said, as Jack appeared before him. "I know you didn't mean it; but you must play in here until it is time for you to go out. Papa is very sleepy, and you disturb him."

"All right," said Jack. "I'll play in here. I forgot."

Then Jarley patted Jack on the head, rubbed his nose again dubiously, for it still smarted from the effects of the blow it had sustained, and retired to his bed once more. If he fondly hoped to sleep again, he soon found that his hope was based upon a most shifting founda-

tion, for the whoops and cries and noises of all sorts, vocal and otherwise, that emanated from the next room destroyed all possibility of his doing anything of the sort. At first the very evident enjoyment of his son and heir, as Jarley listened to his goings-on in the nursery, amused him more or less; but his quiet smile soon turned to one of blank dismay when he heard a thunderous roar from Jack, followed by a crash of glass. Again springing from his bed, Jarley rushed in the nursery.

"Well, what's happened now?" he asked.

Jack's under lip curved in the manner which betokens tears ready to be shed.

"Nun-nothing," he sobbed. "I was just k-kicking a goal, and that picture got in the way."

Jarley looked for the picture that had got in the way, and at once perceived that it would never get in the way again, since it was irretrievably ruined. However, he was not overcome by wrath over this incident, because the picture was not of any particular value. It was only a highly colored print of three cats in a basket, which had come with a Sunday newspaper, and had been cheaply framed and hung up in the nursery because Jack had so willed. On principle Jarley had to show a certain amount of displeasure over the accident, and

he did as well as he could under the circumstances, and retired.

For a while Jack played quietly enough, and Jarley was just about dozing off into that delicious forty winks prior to getting up, when shrieks from the second Jarley boy came from the nursery. This time Mrs. Jarley, with one or two expressions of natural impatience, deemed it her duty to interfere. Jarley, she reasoned, had a perfect right to spoil Jack if he pleased, but he had no right to permit Jack to do bodily injury to Tommy; and as Tommy was making the house echo and reëcho with his wails, she deemed it her duty to take a hand. Jarley meanwhile pretended to sleep. He was as wide awake as he ever was; but the atmosphere was not full of warmth, and upon this occasion, as well as upon many others, his conscience permitted him to overlook the shortcomings of his elder son, and to assume a somnolence which, while it was not real, certainly did conduce to the maintenance of his personal comfort. Mrs. Jarley, therefore, rose up in her wrath. It was merely a motherly wrath, however, and those of us who have had mothers will at once realize what that wrath amounted to. She repaired immediately to the nursery, and without knowing anything of the technical terms of the noble game of football,

instinctively realized that Jack and Tommy were having a "scrimmage." That is to say, she was confronted with a structure made up as follows: basement, the ball; first story, Tommy, with his small and tender stomach placed directly over the ball; second story and roof, Jack, lying stomach upward and wiggling, his back accurately registered on Tommy's back, to the detriment and pain of Tommy.

"Get *up,* Jack!" Mrs. Jarley cried. "What on earth are you trying to do to Tommy? Do you want to kill him?"

"Nome," Jack replied innocently. "He wanted to play football, and I'm letting him. He's Harvard and I'm Yale."

A smothered laugh from the adjoining room showed that Jarley was not so soundly sleeping that he could not hear what was going on. Tommy meanwhile continued to wail.

"Well, get up—right away!" cried Mrs. Jarley. "I sha'n't have you abusing Tommy this way."

"Ain't abusin' him," retorted Jack, rising. "I was 'commodatin' him. He wanted to play. When I don't let him play I get scolded, and when I do let him I'm scolded. 'Pears to me you don't want me to do anything."

Thus Thanksgiving Day began, not altogether well, but equanimity was soon restored all around, and everything might have run

smoothly from that time on had not a cold drizzling rain set in about breakfast-time. It was clearly to be an indoor day. And what a day it was!

At ten o'clock the football came into play again.

At eleven the score stood: one clock knocked off the mantelpiece in the library; three chandelier globes broken to bits; one plaster Barye bear destroyed by a low kick from the parlor floor; Tommy with his nose very nearly out of joint, thanks to a flying wedge represented by Jack; Mrs. Jarley's amiability in peril, and Jarley's irritability well developed.

At twelve the ball was confiscated, but restored at twelve-five for the sake of peace and quiet.

At one, dinner was served and eaten in moody silence, Jack having inadvertently punted the ball through the pantry, grazing the chignon of the waitress, and landing in the mayonnaise. It was not a happy dinner, and Jarley began to wish either that he had never been born or that all footballs were in Ballyhack, wherever that might be.

"If it would only clear off!" he moaned. "That boy needs a playground as big as the State of Texas, anyhow, and here we are cooped up in the house, with a football added."

"We'll have to take it away from him," said

Mrs. Jarley, "or else you'll have to take Jack up into the attic and play with him. I can't have everything in the house smashed."

"We'll compromise on Jack's going to the attic. I have no desire to play football," returned Jarley; and this was the plan agreed upon. It would have been a good plan if Jarley had expended some of his inventive genius upon some such game as football solitaire, and instructed Jack therein beforehand; but this he had not done, and the result was that at three o'clock Jarley found himself in the attic involved in a furious game, in which he represented variously Harvard, the goal, the goal-posts, the referee, and acting with too great frequency as understudy for the ball. What he was not, Jack was, and the worst part of it was that there was no tiring Jack. The longer he played, the better he liked it. The oftener Jarley's shins received kicks intended for the football, the louder he laughed. When Jarley, serving as a goal-post, stood at one end of the attic, Jarley junior, standing several yards away, often appeared to mistake him for two goal-posts, and to make an honest effort to kick the ball through him. Slowly the hours passed, until finally six o'clock struck, and Master Jack's supper was announced.

The day was over at last. Wearily Jarley dragged himself down the stairs and reckoned

up the day's losses. In glass and bric-à-brac destroyed he was some twenty or thirty dollars out. In mayonnaise dressing lost at dinner through the untoward act of the football he was out one pleasurable sensation to his palate, and Jarley was one of those to whom that is a loss of an irreparable nature. In bodily estate he was practically a bankrupt. Had he bicycled all morning and played golf all the afternoon, he could not have been half so weary. Had he been thrown from a horse flat upon an asphalt pavement, he could not have been half so bruised; all of which Mrs. Jarley considerately noted, and with an effort recovered her amiability for her husband's sake, so that after eight o'clock, at which hour Jack retired to bed, a little rest was obtainable, and Jarley's equanimity was slowly restored.

"Well," said Mrs. Jarley, as they went upstairs at eleven, "it hasn't been a very peaceful day, has it, dear?"

"Oh, that all depends on how you spell peace. If you spell it p-i-e-c-e, it's been full of pieces," returned Jarley, with a smile; "but I say, my dear, I want to modify my statement last night that I had nothing to be thankful for. I have discovered one great blessing."

"What's that—a football?" queried Mrs. Jarley.

"Not by ten thousand long shots!" cried

Jarley. "No, indeed. It's this: I'm more thankful than I can express that Jack is not twins. If he had been, you'd have been a widow this evening."

THE GRATEFUL LUNELLA *

Elisabeth Sanxay Holding

There was always a quality of enchantment for Clare in entering her own flat at the end of the day. When she turned the key, there was that little domain awaiting her, peaceful, exquisitely neat, glowing with quiet colors. It seemed to her that, of all the people she knew, she alone had discovered this secret of a perfect home, a serene and ordered place, where one could really enjoy rest.

For all she saw of the process, the flat might have been kept in order by Brownies—except that Brownies ask only a saucer of milk and present no bill for services. She had arranged with an agency for a reliable woman to come in every day, and every day somebody did come, unseen by Clare. She went out in the morning, and while she was gone, all was made ready for her return.

A florist had a standing order to keep her supplied with flowers; she liked not to know

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what would be sent, but to be delighted with a sudden vision of jonquils or roses or peonies. Every detail of her life at home was lovely. She had not only physical ease and comfort, but all those other things to gratify her fastidious and varied tastes: a rosewood piano, shelves and shelves of books, two or three signed lithographs on the walls, and from her window a glimpse of the Hudson.

On this special evening she came home as usual, in her usual tranquil and contented frame of mind. It was a wild, rainy November night; but what cared she for that? She had taken a taxi up from the office, and she stepped out of it under the portico of the apartment-house and entered the hall, smiling, faintly rosy, and quite unruffled.

A charming young woman, Clare was, blonde and slender, with clear, delicate skin, and gleaming hair that testified proudly to the care given it. She was quietly and becomingly dressed, and she had a manner rather remarkable for her twenty-five years—the unmistakable manner of the successful.

The hall-boy and the elevator-boy showed her marked respect; everyone did, for she knew very well how to get what she wanted, and was always ready to pay for it.

She opened the door of her flat, pressed the switch-button in the hall, and at once two shaded

lamps blossomed like living flowers of soft, blended colors. The perfume of roses greeted her; on the table lay two new magazines come by mail; a delightful evening awaited her.

She telephoned downstairs to the hall-boy and asked him to go to the little restaurant 'round the corner and bring her in dinner—that being her custom when the weather was bad and she did not care to stop at her usual restaurant on the way home. Then she washed, brushed her hair, put on slippers and a negligée; and, just at the right moment, the dinner came.

She arranged it on a little table by the window and sat down there. The rain was driving in violent gusts against the glass, and she drew aside the curtains so that she might see the the wild blackness outside. And there was Clare, so snug, so justly comfortable, in this little refuge she had won by her own efforts. All alone she had accomplished this; she often said to herself, with pride, that she owed nothing to anybody else, and she imagined that that was a good thing.

Her parents had died when she was a child; but they had left enough money for her education, and the aunt who had looked after her in those brief intervals when she was at home from boarding-school had been well repaid for her trouble. It had been always a matter of

business between her and Clare, and nothing more.

After school, Clare had gone to an art institute and taken a course in textile designing, and had got a good job and done well in it; and then got a better one, and gone on and on, until at twenty-five she was—where she was. And it seemed to her a good place to be.

She was just finishing her coffee when the front door-bell rang. Now, this should have been impossible, and Clare was displeased. It was the hall-boy's business to see that no one got up here without first being announced by telephone, and he had never before failed in his duty. Clare frowned a little as she went to open the door.

The queerest little figure stood there. A very small girl, in a wet and bedraggled cotton dress, with a towel pinned around her head in the fashion of a Red Cross nurse. Her eyes were wide with fright, and she was trembling from head to foot yet for all this, she had such an air of grown-up responsibility.

"Excuse me, ma'am," she said. "But—but I'm afraid I've set his house afire."

Clare stared at her in amazement.

"If you'd jist please come an' see!" said the child.

"But I don't understand!" said Clare. "Whose house? Where?"

"Mr. Arthur's house—right here—next to yours. Jist please step in—"

"Next door! Call the boys! Ring for the elevator!" said Clare, with considerable energy. "I'll telephone—"

"No, ma'am! Please don't do that!" cried the little girl. "Please, please don't! If you'll jist step in—you an' me kin put the fire out. It's only a little, weeny fire! Oh, please come!"

"My dear child—" Clare began; but when she looked down at the poor trembling little thing, "I'll go and take a look," she said doubtfully.

The little girl was off like a shot, and Clare followed her into the apartment next her own. She was met by a dense, choking cloud of smoke that stopped her.

"Come back!" she called. "Come back, child!"

But the child had disappeared into the smoke, and Clare hurried after her, down the passage, and into the front room.

"It's here, ma'am!" said a stifled little voice, and in the corner of the room where the smoke was thickest, Clare saw the child. She ran to her, and caught her by the arm.

"Come at once!" she said. "You'll—"

Then her eye fell upon a curious shrouded object on the writing-desk, which was evidently the cause and fountain head of all the smoke.

She could not discern what the thing was, but at least it was only smoldering, without flame.

"Bring some water!" she cried. "Hurry up!"

"I—I dassent," faltered the little girl. "I dassent put water on Mr. Arthur's desk . . . ."

So Clare got water herself, plenty of it, in a saucepan from the kitchen, and poured it liberally over the smoldering object. Then she flung open the windows and, as the room cleared, was able at last to investigate this remarkable fire. From the top of the desk, she lifted a reeking woolen mass, sodden with water.

"What's this?" she asked.

"It's m-my coat," said the little girl. "I throwed it on, to see if I couldn't—kind o' smother out the fire."

Clare looked at the garment; a plaid coat, it was, the cheapest, flimsiest little coat, with big pearl buttons.

"But what *was* the fire?" she asked, more gently.

"I was jist clearing up Mr. Arthur's desk—an'—it cotched."

"But how?"

"I jist wanted ter see—jist wanted ter see—" Sobs choked her. "Jist thought them candles must look so pretty when they're lit up—an' the match dropped outen my hand—fell in a little box 'at had cotton in it—and the whole

thing cotched—so I—I throwed my coat on it. . . . It's all my own fault. I hadn't ought ter of m-meddled. . . ."

Clare was, as a rule, very fond of justice, and of people taking the consequence of their acts, and that sort of thing. But in this case she was simply and unjustly sorry for this forlorn little creature instead of blaming her. That poor little drenched coat!

"My dear—" she began, when the child seized her arm.

"Mr. Arthur!" she whispered. "Oh, my goodness gracious me! Oh, whatever will he do to me!"

Clare could not help smiling at this exaggerated alarm although she was far from easy herself. It was an undignified, it was a ridiculous position, to be caught here by this Mr. Arthur. She heard a step in the passage; she could not get out without meeting him, so she stood her ground.

"What the—! What's all this?" exclaimed a voice, and there he was, in the doorway.

And he was, Clare thought, exactly the sort of person she did not want him to be. He was the sort of man who would not understand things, who would not make allowances; one of those aloof, high-and-mighty young men, handsome, with a distinguished nose.

"There was a little accident," said Clare,

in her cool, business voice. "I live in the next flat, and I stepped in to see if I could help."

"That was very good of you!" said he earnestly. "Very! Thanks!"

She rather liked the way he spoke. Perhaps he was not so high-and-mighty as he looked.

"You're quite welcome," she answered, a little more human herself. "There's really no harm done. The poor little girl did the best she could. She called me—"

"Yes," said he. "But who is she, any how? What was she doing here?"

"But I thought she belonged here!" said Clare, surprised.

"Never saw her before in my life!" said he.

"I'm—I'm Lunella!" she cried, in a terrified squeak.

"Yes; but even at that," said Mr. Arthur, "even if you are Lunella, what were you doing here?"

"I'm Mrs. Jenkins's daughter!" said she, in despair. "Mrs. Jenkins, 'at always does the flat for you. She was real sick terday, and she sent me to do the cleanin'."

"I see!" said he. "But aren't you pretty young?"

"No, sir. Sixteen years ole."

"Oh, Lunella!" he said reproachfully.

She began to cry.

"Look here!" he said. "Don't cry! Speak

the truth, and fear no man. How old are you really?"

" 'L-leven."

"All right! You run home now, and come back in seven years, and you can have the job. Go on, now!"

"But Mommer's sick—and somebody's got ter work!" cried Lunella, passionately. "If you'll jist let me wait an' finish, you'll *see* how good I kin do!"

"Sorry, Lunella, but—"

"Oh, jist go an' set in that lady's parlor for half a nour!" said Lunella, with a sort of exasperation. "I'll knock on the wall when I'm done. Jist half a nour!"

There was a moment of blank silence. Then Mr. Arthur caught Clare's eye, and they both began to laugh. Clare did not want to laugh, but she couldn't help it, and once she had done so, a sort of bond was established between them.

"If you'd like to come in . . ." said Clare.

This was the least she could say, in the circumstances, and he should have understood that, and should have said, "Oh, thank you very much! I'd be pleased to, some other time." But instead of that he said only, "Thanks!" and did come.

Clare was proud of her lovely little room and expected that he would say something in praise of it. He did not. When asked to sit down, he

did sit down; when asked if he would care to smoke, he lit a cigarette. And, when, merely in the course of polite conversation, she asked him about his work, again he took her at her word and began to tell her about his work.

He was an architect, and nobody could have accused him of lack of interest in his profession. He talked, walking up and down the room scattering cigarette ashes over the rug. He went back into his own apartment to fetch some blue prints, and when he had them he pushed everything down to one end of her orderly table, so that he might spread out the prints before her. He shoved a vase of roses off onto the floor, but that did not interrupt him.

When he paused, to light another cigarette, Clare mentioned that, as a textile designer, she was interested in interior decorating.

"Yes . . . I see!" he said, and went on with his own subject. He grew excited, striding up and down. Tobacco ashes flew about wildly as he drew plans in the air; he went to the window to explain his idea as to what sort of buildings ought to be built upon the Drive and, to get a clearer view, he yanked aside a curtain with such vigor that it was pulled off the rod.

Just then Clare heard a knocking on the wall; fortunately, he heard it too.

"Must be Lunella," he said, and looked at Clare somewhat anxiously; no doubt he wanted

to stay longer. But Clare only smiled, a polite, polite smile, and off he went.

The door slammed after him—he was, thought Clare, the sort of person who slams doors—and she sat down and looked about her room. Ashes everywhere, the curtain torn down, the table in disorder, the vase of roses still lying in a pool of water. How quiet it was, without him!

"He's awful!" she thought. "The most self-centered, overbearing man! I hope I'll never see him again."

She began to straighten up the room.

"He had a nice way with that child though," she thought, with admirable fair-mindedness. "Perhaps, after all—"

She had scarcely got home the next day when the door-bell rang, and there was Mr. Arthur again.

"Good evening!" he said. "Look here! She's here again. Lunella, I mean. Can't you do something with her?"

"I?" said Clare. "But—"

"I found her there when I got in," he went on. "Working. She had a tale about her mother being sick and her grandmother blind and her little brother's hurt his head, and, as far as I can make out, Lunella's the sole support of a large and worthless family. I offered her some money; but she won't take it, unless she

can 'work it out.' And I can't have the poor little kid buzzing about while I'm home. I've *got* to have peace and quiet."

"I'm sorry," said Clare, frigidly; "but I need peace and quiet too."

"Yes, I know. But, you see, there's my work."

"Unfortunately, there's my work too," said Clare.

"Yes, of course. But, after all, you're a woman, you know—"

That was entirely too much!

"Certainly! I'm only a woman," said Clare, "so, of course—"

"I didn't say 'only' a woman!" he protested.

"You thought it," said Clare.

"I didn't! Give you my word I didn't! All I thought was that, being a woman, you'd know what to do with the poor little pest. Because I—well—I haven't much tact. . . . And I'm so tired!"

He did look tired, and in spite of herself Clare couldn't help feeling sorry for him. She was tired, too; but that was different. He seemed to be one of those excessive, unreasonable persons who don't know how and when to rest.

"If you feel that you've got to let her come," she said, in a practical tone, "tell her to come in the morning, when you're away."

"She can't. She goes to school. And the thing is—she's so grateful. I don't know what for, but it's—well—pathetic."

Again was Clare disarmed by his kindness to Lunella.

"If you'd care to come in until she's finished—" she said, not very cordially.

"Thanks!" said he eagerly. "Nothing I'd like better! You know, I enjoyed our little talk last night."

Our talk!

He sank into a chair with a sigh; but almost at once straightened up again.

"Look here!" he said. "Perhaps I'm bothering you. Perhaps you want to cook your dinner—something of the sort. . . ."

"I don't waste my time in cooking," said Clare. "Restaurants—"

"I'm so sick of restaurants I never want to eat any more!" said he. "But what a pretty little place you have here. Homelike. I tell you, it takes a woman—"

"No, it doesn't!" Clare interrupted. "It takes a little planning and management, that's all. I'm away from home all day, just as you are."

"Yes, I know. But it takes a feminine mind to think of all these things."

"I hope I haven't a 'feminine mind,'" she said, frigidly.

"But don't you want to have one?" he asked, in genuine surprise.

She did not trouble to answer this, and for a time they were both silent. Mr. Arthur was evidently thoughtful.

At last he began to talk, and now he showed a proper interest in her. Not in her work; he always evaded that topic; but he liked to hear what she thought about things, he liked to hear about her art-school days; and she fancied that he rather liked to look at her. Because every time she happened to look at him, she caught him looking at her. And this did not especially annoy her, even if he did think she had a feminine mind.

If Lunella knocked on the wall, nobody heard her. Two hours had passed when he sprang to his feet.

"After nine!" he cried. "That's too bad!"

"But it's been very nice to talk to you," said Clare, politely.

"Yes, I know," he said; "but I had a lot of work to do this evening. I had no business to waste two hours."

Off he went, in a hurry, slamming the door after him. Clare sat down and picked up a book, a very interesting book.

"Beast!" she said to herself, in a trembling voice. "Rude, selfish beast! *Wasting* two

hours—that's what he called it! Very well; I'm sure I don't care—"

The door-bell rang.

"Let it ring!" she thought. "I don't want to see—*anybody!*"

Another ring, and this time she opened the door. There he was.

"Look here!" he said. "I'm afraid I was a bit—abrupt, wasn't I?"

"It doesn't matter," said Clare.

"It does!" he insisted vehemently. "It does! Because I—I was so happy in there with you. I— Please! Look here! I'm sorry!"

In spite of herself she was mollified by this artless speech, and he must have read this in her face.

"See here!" he said eagerly. "Won't you take dinner with me to-morrow night? Anywhere you like—"

"You said you were sick of restaurants."

"Well, so I am. But with you—"

"Then come here and have dinner with me," said Clare, suddenly, "and we'll have a *home* dinner."

She told herself the next morning that she was a perfect idiot. A home dinner, indeed! She had no time after her day's work to bother with anything of the sort.

"But as long as I've asked him, I'll do the thing properly," she said to herself.

At odd moments all through the day she thought of the various details of her dinner, and when she left the office she had her list complete.

She really enjoyed going to market, for a change. And the first thing she did when she got home was to ring Mr. Arthur's bell.

"Lunella," she said, when the little girl opened the door, "do you want to come in and wait on the table? Mr. Arthur's having dinner with me."

"Yes, ma'am!" said Lunella, gravely.

There was a marked change in Lunella; not only was she wearing a new dress and new shoes, but her manner had become portentous.

"Mr. Arthur must have everything jist so," she observed, as she followed Clare. "Mommer always told me so, and now I can see it—"

"Nonsense!" said Clare, briskly. "Now then, if you'll set the table, Lunella—"

Clare worked for an hour and a half over that dinner. The table was charming with a centerpiece of violets and lilies-of-the-valley; the room was so tranquil and pretty in the lamplight. She was glad to think that she could do this sort of thing well—when she wanted.

Mr. Arthur was very late, but, after all, no particular time had been mentioned, and Clare sat down with a book and waited. At last she heard him go into his own apartment, and she

hurried into the kitchen for a final inspection of the dinner. Then she waited ten minutes, fifteen, twenty, half an hour—and she would have gone on waiting indefinitely if Lunella had not come to the rescue.

"I guess I better jist step around an' see what he's doing," said Lunella. "Maybe he got started workin' and forgot the time."

But as she was leaving Clare's flat she met her Mr. Arthur coming out of his own door. And Clare heard.

"Why, Mr. Arthur!" said the little girl, in a tone of stern surprise. "Ain't you goin' in ter Miss Clare's?"

"Yes," he said. "I did think I'd stop in, later. But I'm going out to get some dinner first."

"Why, you're eatin' there to-night!" cried Lunella, in horror.

"Merciful heavens!" said the young man; then, in a whisper, which Clare also heard, "Look here! *Don't* let her know! Here's a dollar for you, Lunella!"

Clare retreated into the living-room, and when he appeared, ushered in by Lunella, she met him with a perfectly polite smile. But she was angry and she was hurt, terribly hurt.

"Look here!" he said. "I'm so sorry I'm late! I'm—I'm so sorry!" He paused. "I'm so *sorry!*" he said.

And he apologized again and again, with such unnecessary vehemence, with such pathetically artless contrition, and he looked so tired, and he was so boyish in his clumsy efforts to conceal from her the fact that he had forgotten all about her invitation that her anger melted into a very genuine kindliness.

They sat down at the table together, and Lunella brought in the dinner, course by course. He kept on talking to her, in a much nicer way than he had ever talked before; but he neglected the dinner.

"You're not eating!" Clare protested.

"Sorry!" said he. "But I'm rather sick of this soggy, creamy stuff they send in from the restaurant!"

Clare had no intention of being a fool. She admitted to herself that she had been in grave danger of being one; she had even gone so far as to cry, after that home dinner. But she had realized her folly in time, and it was over now. Absolutely over. For three evenings she had taken dinner downtown and stayed away from her apartment until it was too late for any one to bother her.

"Because," she said to herself, on her way home in a taxi, this third evening, "what *is* the use of going on seeing him? Any one who wanted to be—friends with him would simply have to play second fiddle. I don't believe he

really means to be so overwhelming—but he is! He and his work. . . . It's not exactly selfishness; in fact, there's something rather fine about it. And he's very gentle and kind with Lunella. But—well—I'm not fond of playing second fiddle, that's all!"

As she put the key in the latch, her foot touched a package leaning against the door. She took it in with her, and in the living-room she opened it. Three wilted pink roses wrapped in brown paper, and tied to one of the stems, a slip of paper upon which was written in a neat hand:

"Compliments. From Mr. Arthur."

"But—how queer!" she cried, astounded. For, with all his tactlessness, Mr. Arthur had not impressed her as a man who would send a lady three wilted roses wrapped in brown paper, and with such a peculiar greeting.

"He must know better than that!" she thought. "It's—"

Then, without the slightest provocation, she began to cry, for the second time that week.

"I don't care!" she said. "It's pathetic! He is so blundering, and so dreadful, and so—"

She stopped crying suddenly.

"Nonsense!" she said to herself, a little frightened. "I must be overtired. I'll get into bed and read."

But first she picked up the outrageous bouquet and put it into a vase of water.

As she stood in the doorway, ready to turn off the switch, the most curious emotion came over her. That room which had always seemed so charming, appeared to her now as the stupidest, primmest, most hateful room she had ever seen. Each chair in its place; the magazines lying on the table in a neat row, overlapping each other, those neat, polite flowers!

"It's—a nasty—detestable—*old-maid* room!" she cried, with a sob, and snapped out the lights, to be done with it.

In the dark she remembered how it had looked with the chairs kicked aside, and ashes all over the floor, and the table in wild disorder. How—how human it had looked then!

Miss Payne, Clare's assistant, arrived in the office next morning with a traveling-bag and an air of suppressed excitement.

"I'm going back home to-night," she said, "to spend Thanksgiving on the farm."

"Thanksgiving!" Clare repeated. "That's to-morrow, of course. I'd forgotten."

Indeed, she had no special reason for remembering it. She had no farm to go back to, no family, not even any particular memories of past Thanksgivings. The air of festivity in the office vexed and troubled her. The bookkeeper was garrulous about his turkey—a twenty-two

pounder, he said—picked it out himself in Washington Market—the wife always left that to him—said she couldn't do half so well.

"She only tells him that to humor him," thought Clare. But somehow the idea did not annoy her as it would once have done.

An odd, unhappy mood came upon her. She was reluctant to leave the cheerful office; she lingered, listening with unusual interest to other people's plans, to all this talk about family dinners, and homes, and turkeys.

A high wind blew, a cruel wind. She buttoned the collar of her fur coat about her neck as she stepped out into the street, and set off resolutely to walk to Washington Square, where she would take a bus. She made a point of getting plenty of exercise.

"I take good care of myself!" she had said, with a smile, when Miss Payne had urged her to take a taxi.

And as she was fighting her way against the wind, those words came back to her.

"I take good care of—*myself.*"

Yes, that was just what she did. And at the end, she would have the love and gratitude of—herself. And of nobody else; nobody else in the world.

A sort of terror seized her. She knew now what was the matter with her. She was horribly, unbearably lonely.

"I'll—I'll do something for Lunella," she thought, panic-stricken. "I'll help her—I'll teach her. I'll *make* her love me."

When she got home, she gave the hall-boy and the elevator-boy tips that astounded them. "For Thanksgiving!" she said. And as she went upstairs, she was at least followed by a hearty "Thank you" from somebody.

She had sent for her dinner from the restaurant again. It was early, quite early enough for Anybody to come, if anybody wanted. . . . The door-bell rang. And she was glad. She wanted to see him, she wanted to be kind, to be gracious, to hold out her hand to this stranger, in honest kindliness.

She opened the door, and there he stood, with two traveling-bags beside him. In his overcoat and soft hat he looked somehow unfamiliar, older and graver; but when he saw her, he took off his hat and smiled, and it was the same boyish and engaging smile.

"I've got the commission for the country club!" he said. "I thought maybe you'd like to know."

"Yes!" said Clare unsteadily. "I'm very glad to know. Very."

And so she was; glad, and proud, and beyond measure touched, that he should come to her like this, so sure of her interest and her sympathy.

"They approved the plans this morning," he went on. "So that's that. It's been a bit of a strain—but I'm going back home to-night, to Boston, to spend Thanksgiving with my people. A rest!"

He too! And he never thought of asking what she was going to do; he was just going off, "back home," to "his people!"

"I hope you'll enjoy yourself," she said politely.

"Well . . ." he said dubiously.

He stood there, looking at her, with the shadow of a frown, and she fancied she saw in his eyes a troubled and unhappy inquiry. As if he were waiting. Those poor, poor little flowers. . . . He hadn't ever meant to offend her; she knew it; it was just his way. . . . He looked so tired, and he had come to her direct with his good news. . . . She could not let him go like this.

"Thank you for the flowers," she said very low.

"The flowers?" he repeated.

"Yes, I—I got them, thank you."

"But, see here!" he cried. "I never sent you any flowers! I—"

The front door closed smartly. He rang, but no one came. So he went away.

At last Clare tried knocking. Ringing had had no effect, although she knew very well that

Lunella was in there; she had heard her singing. And when she knocked, it was unmistakably the knock of one who intends to be admitted. It was effective; presently she heard footsteps come pattering along the passage and a stern voice asked:

"Who's there?"

"Open the door!" said Clare, and Lunella did.

" 'Scuse me!" she said. "I didn't know it was you, ma'am. I—"

"Come into my flat, Lunella. I want to speak to you."

" 'Scuse me!" said Lunella, again. "But—" She hesitated, squirming beneath Miss Clare's steady regard. "I—I got Baby here."

"Baby? What baby?"

"Mine!" said Lunella, beginning to cry. "I jist thought Baby an' me could sleep here while Mr. Arthur was away. It's so—so sort o' crowdy at home. An' I was goin' to give Baby a good bath 'fore I put him in the bed. . . ."

"Upon my word!" said Clare. "Very well! I'll come in and talk to you here."

This was a mistake. For a long time Clare had been sitting alone in her own apartment, and she had become convinced of Lunella's guilt, and filled with a just anger against her. But she was already half disarmed by Lunella's tears, and when she entered Mr. Arthur's

sitting-room, the last little bit of justice died in her heart.

Seated upon a carefully spread-out newspaper on the floor was a tiny, pale, blue-eyed baby, his head swathed in a bandage. At the sight of the stranger, he put his arms across his eyes, and gave a faint gasp.

Lunella yanked his arms down.

"Ain't you ashamed o' yourself!" she admonished, "Actin' like you're afraid o' Miss Clare!" She turned to Clare, apprehensive, yet proud. "He's the younges' o' seven," she explained. "An' every one of 'em dead but him an' me!"

"What will Mr. Arthur say?" asked Clare. But her tone was not so severe as she wished, because that baby was looking at her through his fingers.

"I acted for the best, ma'am!" said the tearful Lunella. "I didn't think he'd mind"—and added with fine candor —"if he didn't know."

Clare was silent for a moment.

"Lunella," she said at last, "you put those flowers outside my door, didn't you?"

"I—acted for the best!" sobbed Lunella. "I jist knew Mr. Arthur would o' sent you flowers, if it had o' come inter his head."

"Where did you get them?"

"M-Mr. Arthur's key fits—your door. I jist took a few o' y-your own flowers. . . ."

"Didn't you know that was very wrong?"

"I jist acted for the best," said Lunella, still weeping, but resolute. "That time I saw you an' Mr. Arthur eatin' dinner together it was jist like one o' these here movies where there's a gen'leman and a lady so took with—"

"Never mind!" Clare interrupted hastily. She stood for a moment, looking at the two forlorn little intruders. "You can't stay here," she said.

"No, ma'am," said Lunella, with a trembling lip. "Only Mommer don't expect us back ternight. We said we'd stay here—an' she's went out. . . . An'—an'—I jist did want W-Willy ter get a nice, good bath for onct!"

"Oh, you poor little girl!" cried Clare. "You poor little thing! Lunella, I'll tell you what! We'll bring your little brother into my place and give him a nice hot bath, and you and he can sleep on the couch in the living-room. And to-morrow, Lunella, we'll have the best Thanksgiving dinner we can possibly buy. Just you and I and—" Her voice had grown a little unsteady. "Just we three, Lunella," she said.

"Oh!" cried Lunella. "Oh, you're jist like an angel!"

So they all went, and the decorous quiet of Clare's flat was disturbed, at ten o'clock at night, by remarkable stir and bustle. Water running in the bathtub, Lunella's willing feet

running back and forth, putting sheets on the couch, fetching plenty of clean towels, getting ready a bowl of warm milk and graham biscuits to revivify the baby when his unprecedented adventure should be over.

Lunella went to her bath first, quite pale with awe of this glittering room, this great, deep tub of water, this beautiful soap, this heavenly talcum powder, all this incredible luxury freely offered to her. And as the door closed after her, Clare picked up the baby.

It was a very, very good baby, quiet in that subdued way of babies who have learned that their tears will bring them no benefits; but it had an alarming habit of falling off things, and Clare decided that she would hold it until it was safely stowed away for the night.

She took off the bandage, and found a great bruise under its silky matted hair; she did not quite know what to do for this, but her heart suggested a very ancient remedy: she held the little thing close in her arms, and it lay there, quiet and content.

The door-bell rang.

"No!" she said, half aloud. "I won't! I won't! I can't!"

Nevertheless, she had risen, and taken a step toward the hall when the bathroom door opened and out dashed Lunella, with crimson face and

damp wild hair, wearing an old flannelette night-dress Clare had given her.

"Mr. Arthur!" she shouted. "It's him!"

And, stumbling over the long night-dress, down the hall she rushed, and flung open the front door. There he was.

"I saw a light—" said he. "So, I thought—"

"You said you were going to Boston," said Clare, coldly.

"Yes, I know," he answered. "I know. But—I couldn't. I got as far as Stamford, and then I—came back."

"Oh, did you?" said Clare, civilly.

"I know you were offended because I hadn't sent you flowers—"

"Offended!" she cried, hot with anger. "How can you dare to think that? Why should I—"

"Oh, please!" he interrupted, terribly distressed. "I know I always say the wrong thing. But I don't *think* like that. I—well, you can't imagine what I think! Please let me give you these! Please take them!" He stooped and picked up a long box from the floor beside his bags—a florist's box—and came down the hall with it.

"Please!" he said, holding it out to her. Then, apparently for the first time, he noticed the baby.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Lunella's little brother," she answered, and something in his face made her glance away hastily. "He's such a nice baby!" she said. "We're going to give him a bath now—and it's awfully late. . . ."

"Look here!" said he. "Would it be tactless if I said that I never—never in all my life—saw anything so—so womanly and lovely as you are—this minute?"

"No," said Clare, after a long pause. "It's only being 'feminine' that I don't like! But—really it's very late—"

"I know that's a hint," he said forlornly; "but—look here—it's too soon, isn't it, to say anything yet? I mean—about a ring and so on, you know. . . ?"

"I don't know," said Clare, doubtfully. "You're so absent-minded! You might forget if you waited too long."

He stared at her for a moment.

"Clare!" he cried.

She shook her head. She smiled, though her eyes were misty.

"I don't want to talk just now," she said. "It's late—and I'm busy. But—Lunella and I invite you to Thanksgiving dinner to-morrow. Don't forget!"

"WITH PRAYER AND FASTING" *

Emery Pottle

The morning was gray and raw. Leaden clouds tinged with pale cold whiteness hung over the world. They suggested snow. The crawling chill of the day gnawed into the bones of the few folk who were about. They shivered and swore and hurried through their labor to get to the waiting fires. It was early, hardly seven o'clock, and there was no promise of sun.

In the half-warm smoking-car of the local morning train,—starting and ending who knows where,—which plied patiently and uncertainly through one of the many valleys of western New York, sat two men. They were alone. Obviously both were physically uncomfortable, as betokened their uneasy shiftings of body, their attempts to infold themselves more securely in their overcoats, their half-suppressed sighs. Neither of them was remarkable in himself. They were of the type—roughly speaking, the business type—of American, familiar enough; lean of face, alert, nervous, good-looking, un-

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suggestive, quietly dressed. One might have reckoned their ages between thirty-seven and forty. Laying aside such differences as the value of the materials of their clothes and the fashionableness of their cut, the bodily sense of keen prosperity emanating from the one man and the indefinite bodily sense of defiant failure emanating from the other, there was left no important physical distinction between the two. The distinction, then, lay in their mental states—a tremendous distinction to the curious analyst. It was the younger man's lack of composure which betrayed this. He had lost control of his eyes. They shifted and turned and dropped and raised. One might almost say they jumped, advanced, retreated, hid, emerged huntedly, shivered, swore, challenged, and hid again. This was scarcely heeded by the older man, who kept his gaze for the most part on the window, watching the changing changelessness of the dull brown country and the hopeless clusters of villages. His lips flickered with the light of a complacent smile, reminiscent yet triumphant. Presently he spoke to his fellow-traveler.

"Looks as if we might have an old-fashioned Thanksgiving, doesn't it?"

The abrupt sound of the voice nearly jerked the younger man from his seat. When he gained control of himself he answered, indiffer-

ently: "You mean snow? Or prayer and fasting like the old Pilgrims went in for?"

"I meant snow. That prayer and fasting business is a back number, isn't it?"

"Looks like it. We've got God pushed off the map nowadays," said the younger, grimly. "The game now is to get together and eat and drink till you can't hold any more and thank our almighty selves that we've fooled 'em—old Nature and our neighbors—again. Oh, we're thankful all right. But it makes the Pilgrim father look foolish."

The listener nodded indulgently. "That's one way of putting it," he replied. "Not many traveling to-day. Everybody home. Good place to be. Sha'n't mind it myself. I came up from New York on the express and changed down below here. Hard trip, too, isn't it? I haven't been over this road at this time of year in nearly twenty years. It doesn't change much—sort of a year-in-and-year-out crop prosperity."

"It's prosperous enough," admitted his companion. "It wouldn't matter much if there wasn't crop prosperity. Nobody is going to starve to death. Plenty of grain somewhere else, plenty of manufactures to be had. No cause for keeping the Lord up nights to beseech Him. As I say, it's only when we've got somebody or something beat that we begin to be thankful. And then, out of a slight sense of decency, we

occasionally lay it off on Him and tell Him He did it. But everybody who's frank knows that God isn't in on the deal. We do it ourselves."

"You're a cynic, my friend," said the older man. "Better not upset customs. It doesn't pay. I don't know where you are going to-day—I hope to a good, comfortable, friendly place to eat a good dinner. That's what I'm going to do —with my father. The old gentleman is close on to seventy. I haven't eaten a Thanksgiving dinner with him in years."

The opening and closing of the car door by a brakeman caused the younger man to turn, with uneasy, furtive eyes. He did not reply to his companion.

"It's the home feeling," pursued the other, "that the American nation is strong on. There's where the thankfulness comes in."

"Is it? I thought it was making money—getting money," retorted the younger man, ironically. "I don't know that we are so thankful for the home. I don't know that we are so damned thankful for anything. We lie and say we are—that's all."

"Look here, you aren't in the spirit of this holiday," laughed the other. "You can't spoil my appetite for that turkey waiting for me. Brace up!"

The younger man answered his laugh shortly.

"I don't want to spoil your dinner. Only I'm sick of this fake sentiment of ours. I can understand the with-prayer-and-fasting idea when the Indians are after you and the chances are you'll be dead—or worse—before the winter is over. But I'm in no condition to-day to join in pæans of praise because, though John Doe has maybe done me, I was cute enough to do Richard Roe—and ask God's blessing on my home."

He lapsed back into reserve which he accentuated by taking from his pocket a newspaper. The other man returned to his scrutiny of the landscape. The train creaked and rattled and jolted onward into the gathering day. From time to time the hunted eyes of the younger man lifted and searched the face of the other, curiously, not antagonistically, even with wistfulness. Presently his attention was caught by the increasing ashen grayness of his companion's face. At first he regarded it as a trick of light and meditated on the strange appearance of age and haggard illness it lent to the face. "Rich, getting richer, and all played out physically," he considered. "God!—God!—they're thankful to God. That's a joke." Yet the ashen pallor grew until he knew it was no effect of light and shadow. "That man is ill and he's getting worse. What's going to be done?"

His companion sunk together in his seat, hud-

dled into a heap, his face drawn to ghastly rigidity, his eyes staring and frightened. His hands clutched agonizingly on the empty air. His whole body contracted and relaxed horribly as if some lance of torture were alternately plunged into him and withdrawn slowly.

"What is it? What's the matter?" The younger man bent over him in solicitude—unwilling solicitude—raising him on his arm.

The other's hand struck against his heart. "That," he groaned. "Heart—I can't breathe—Ah-h—heart—spell—haven't had one—for—years." The agony seized him with renewed force, racking his body.

"Haven't you any brandy—whiskey?" asked the younger man, desperately.

His companion shook his head. He was past speaking for the moment. "Nor I," said the other, staring helplessly at the sick man. "This is a fine business," he told himself. "Is he going to die here? Who is he? And where does he live? What am I to do?" His face was compassionate, yet he felt a vast irritation at the situation, manifest in the nervous action of his hands and mouth.

In a momentary relief from the increasing spasms, the elder man gasped: "Get me off of here—anywhere—next station. This is killing me—I've got to lie down—or die. You've got to get me off."

His companion gazed speculatively down the length of the car in the direction whence they had come. His brows contracted in a sharp grip of thought. He glanced back at the writhing form behind him, half in contempt, half in pity. Once it seemed as if he were on the point of leaving the car. The train was slacking speed for the next stop. As the noise of the car lessened he could hear more plainly the low, incoherent groans of the other. The instant of decision came and passed. He shrugged his shoulders. "I see my finish," he muttered, "but I can't leave the poor devil to die."

He called the brakeman and together they lifted the man from his seat and took him out on the platform before the little bleak, deserted station.

"He's pretty near all in, ain't he?" whispered the brakeman, as he returned to his car. The train pulled out, leaving the two alone.

An hour later the sick man was lying in the "spare bedroom" in the house of the station telegraph operator—a sympathetic, hospitable young man with an ailing wife and three small children. His fellow-traveler, who had been so forced to befriend him, was still there. The room itself was small and ugly and dark and cold. The new-made fire which crackled in an unshapely stove had scarcely begun to make an impression on the ancient lurking chill of the

place. From time to time the pale, listless wife of the operator put her head in the door in mute questions. From out the shelter of her skirts would peer a little towheaded child or two, fearful and fascinated. In response to her unasked inquiry she got always a shake of the head from the man who sat beside the bed. Outside it had begun to snow, a thick, wet, obliterating snow.

They had done all that could be done for the man who was ill. But that was little. The village in which they found themselves was only a handful of upright-and-wing houses scattered about the rows of steel rails. There was a doctor, but he, also, had fallen ill and lay in his bed. They had telephoned to the nearest village for another. He was away. When he came back she would tell him, so his wife said, but certainly he must first eat his Thanksgiving dinner. There was nothing left but to watch and wonder—and to hope, if to hope were worth the effort.

Our reluctant friend sat beside the bed and pondered, now and again shrugging his shoulders, a whimsical shadow of a smile in the corners of his tight-drawn mouth. He was still in his overcoat. And the man whom destiny had thrust ruthlessly into his charge lay in the bed groaning wretchedly, a gaunt, gray wreck of a man. The shadowy smile sometimes deepened

on the younger man's face, as if the full bizarre absurdity of this blind, indeterminable event overcame him, and he would turn away his head.

"Why doesn't the doctor come?" kept demanding the other.

"He'll come—don't worry," was the invariable answer.

"But— Oh, God, man!— I may *die.*"

"No, you won't. You'll be better soon."

For the first hour or two after the sick man had been put in bed it seemed as if his pain were lessening. The watcher took heart. In one of the periods when his charge lay motionless with closed eyes, he felt softly in the pockets of the man's discarded garments until he found a leather case. In it he discovered what he searched for—the man's cards. "Fraser Warren," he read, and the address was that of a well-known New York club. "I can't say I'm glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Warren," he thought. Then suddenly, "What if you die? That's my finish." He jumped to his feet and strode to the window, gazing out on the meek desolation of the winter country, already lightly palled with snow. "He *mustn't* die. I'm done for if he dies." He went hastily back to the bed and bent over.

As if to defeat his will, the paroxysms of pain began again, with the sharpness of death in

their stabs. Warren's eyes met his in the wild, dumb agony of an animal. Warren had forgotten, as the desperately ill forget, his relation to his companion; he saw in him the one human near thing between him and—an end.

"Don't let me die," he got out shrilly. "Don't, *don't!* Help me. Can't you *do* something! God, don't leave me! Sit here—on—bed. Hold my hand—tight. Tighter than that. I mustn't lose my nerve—if I lose my head, I'm gone. I—can live—if I don't get frightened. Rub my wrists—*hard, hard, hard.* Too much at stake—business—understand? Big—business—big deal next week. You won't leave me, will you?"

"No—I'll stay right here. Don't worry."

"Oh, man, there's a woman—I'm going to marry her—next month—you *hear?* Marry—next month—I tell you I won't *die.*"

So it went on. The other sat on the edge of the bed and held Warren's hand in a stern, unrelaxing grip, not daring to loosen his fingers. With his free hand he chafed the sick man's wrists when the convulsions of pain did not jerk them away. He began to lose the sense of his own identity, this watcher, as he sat there in his cramped uncomfortableness, his ears jangling with the piteous, childish cries. His belief in the dignity of death was gone; only pity and contempt remained.

"Where is the doctor?" Warren was crying. "Why doesn't he come?"

"He'll come. He'll be here," the other man answered, mechanically.

"Talk to me," went on Warren, wildly. "Help me keep my head. Read to me, can't you? Why don't you do something? Don't you *care?*"

His companion gazed helplessly about the room. He saw no book there except a cheaply bound Bible on the bureau.

"There's a Bible—you want that?" he asked.

"Anything—only do something."

The younger man released himself long enough to fetch the Bible. It fell open at the Psalms. A grim sense of humor possessed him, and after a moment's search he began to read; as he read he had a mental glimpse of himself sitting on the bed of an unknown man, holding his hand and reading the Bible. It charged his voice with irony.

He took a certain delight in the fine incongruity of it all, in the splendid sarcasm of the words he read in the face of their situation.

" 'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases: who redeemeth thy life from de-

struction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.' "

At first only his mouth was full of the sonorous rhetoric; his thought kept to the grim absurdity of the occasion, to the idea of *his* reading a Thanksgiving psalm at such a time, at such a place. Yet as he went mechanically on, the words took on a new significance, or rather an old significance. A great, fearful solemnity, encompassed him. He forgot the groans of his companion, he forgot the hand he held, the room he was in. There was in him only the sense of two small creatures beset by awful terrors. His voice unconsciously took on a pleading accent. He was reading for himself as well as for Warren. " 'He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.' "

He read on and on, turning backward or forward as the impulse seized him, or as some awakened memory of his boyhood suggested. The puny outcries of this man beside him, his own revolt against the thing he was fleeing from, became in some way dignified and uplifted in the face of: " 'Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they

are like grass which groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.' " Presently he became conscious that he was crying to Something to save *him;* that the words he read were instinct with a human appeal, *his* appeal merging into the appeal of Warren and of the writer of the psalm and of all men. They were at a primitive moment, naked, laid bare, afraid.

The hours went by solemnly. Once the telegraph operator came in on tiptoe and whispered: "The wife wants to know if you'll come down and eat Thanksgiving dinner with us?"

The watcher shook his head. "I can't leave him. I don't want anything to eat." Then he resumed his reading. . . .

Toward twilight, after this strange day of prayer and fasting and pain, the doctor came, a bluff, hearty man, suggestive of his late feasting and good cheer. He gave Warren medicine and some opiate to induce sleep and ease the pain.

"Not a very gay Thanksgiving for you and your friend here," he said as he departed.

The other shook his head absently. "No—a good deal like the original product in some ways."

The doctor stared, then laughed. "Oh, I see—but that's out of date now."

"Yes,—quite," the other answered. He fol-

lowed the doctor into the hall. "What about him?" he asked. "Will he die?"

"I think the worst of it is over. In some miraculous way the man has existed throughout the day. He'll sleep now. To-morrow I'll come again. He'll be better then."

"Yes, come to-morrow. I can't stay. I have to go on as soon as possible."

When Warren had fallen asleep his companion went out under the sky. The snow had ceased. There were high, keen stars. He stood as one on the first awakening from a dream, dazed. The recent experience had been so immemorial, so untranslatable into the more or less expected occurrences of life, that he could not revert easily to his own familiar affairs. The objects of the early morning that he had seen so clearly, whose effect he had calculated so coolly, now, here in this alien vastness, where the rush of Almighty wings might sweep the silence, were almost unthinkable; he was bewildered, unnerved, affrighted.

"What a Thanksgiving Day!" he murmured. "We have spent the day in fear of death—and our enemies—fasting and praying. Great heaven, what a reversion to our forefathers—to the ideas of them! He is not a Puritan exactly, nor am I. And he has escaped. He can be thankful all right. Me—what's the end of me?"

He returned to the upper room. Warren was

asleep. A kerosene lamp burned evilly on the bureau. He pulled a chair to the stove, replenished the fire, and sunk into abstraction. He was so little heedful of the flight of time that it was nearly midnight when Warren stirred, awoke, and called to him in a weak voice.

"Come over here," he said.

His companion came to the bed and sat down. "How are you?" he asked.

"Better. It's over now, thank God. No need to worry. Maybe it won't happen again for a long time. What time is it?"

"About midnight."

"The day has gone. I didn't get home. Queer Thanksgiving, eh?"

"Very."

"You were speaking this morning about—oh—prayer and fasting. We—had it."

"Yes—no doubt of that."

"Do you believe that Bible did any good?"

"It was adapted to the occasion—which is more than you can say of the usual service of the day."

"God knows I'm thankful. I've got a lot to live for. And I can't tell you how thankful I am to you for—"

"Don't try."

"But I want to. Never in all my life was any man so white to me."

"Let's forget that."

"Forget it? I've ruined your day—"

"No, you haven't ruined my *day*. You've only ruined what I was going to do to-day."

"Important?"

"Very."

"I'm sorry. Can't I make it up to you?"

"No."

"I wish you'd tell me your name. Mine is Warren."

"It wouldn't help any to tell you my name, Mr. Warren."

The sick man raised his head curiously. "It would help *me*. Who are you? What made you do this?"

"The Lord knows what made me do it. As to who I am—now that we've got through safely—it can't matter. If you think you can get on alone safely through the night, I'd like to go. There's a train at three in the morning. I want to catch it if I can't help any more."

Warren lifted himself higher in the bed. His eyes, bleached as they were from pain, drew together keenly. "See here," he said quickly, "we've been thrown together for the damnedest Thanksgiving that two men ever had. We've been pretty close to the limit of what life has to offer. You've got a story to tell. Tell it."

His friend laughed shortly. After a moment of hesitation he answered, "You are right. It's a queer day. I'll help to make it queerer. I'm a

defaulter. I was running away when you stopped me. If you hadn't, I'd been far away by now. That's the story."

There was a silence. "So I ruined your chance?" said Warren.

"In all probability."

"How much were you short?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars."

"Not much."

"Not for you maybe. For me."

"What'd you do it for?"

"Wife."

"How do you mean?"

"She was sick. I sent her to a hospital for an operation. She died afterward. I didn't have the money. So I took it out of the firm little by little."

"Ah!" Then— "What firm?"

"May and Spaulding, in Glenloch. I was the cashier."

"John May?"

"Yes."

"I know him. What's your name?"

"Steele—Haven Steele. Suggestive, eh?"

"What are you going to do now?"

"Get out."

"Have they discovered it—the loss?"

"Not yet. They won't before to-morrow night."

"If you are caught?"

Steele shrugged his shoulders.

"If the money were paid?"

"It won't be paid. In any case, May is a hard man. I'm done for there."

"What do you want to do?"

"Get away—begin again. I'm no criminal."

There was another long silence. Warren spoke again. "I know May. I'll—fix it for you before to-morrow night. It so happens that I can fix it."

"Could you fix it so that they wouldn't *chase* me?" demanded Steele, desperately. "That idea of people after me—Indians—*kills* me. Could you do that?"

"I think so."

"Tell him I'll pay it back, will you?"

"Yes."

Steele felt out and found Warren's hand. He held it closely. Suddenly he put his face into his free arm. "God, God, God," he muttered, "I'm thankful. God, I'm thankful. 'Who healeth all thy diseases. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.'"

Neither of them spoke again. The fire died down and the room grew cold. Warren fell asleep once more. Steele gently released his hand, stood for a moment looking into the man's face steadily. Noiselessly he replenished the fire, took his coat and hat, and went away.

BREAKING THE NEWS TO THE FAMILY *

Frederick L. Collins

I WAS, in my circles, a rich man. And a rich man —whether he has a million or just a few thousands—becomes accustomed to being rich. He even gets so he likes it. For, believe me, the philosopher who said "The happy man's without a shirt" never owned a silk one. The rich man is comfortable and, like most comfortable people, happy. And it is not just the inert, purring happiness that comes to the well-fed, well-warmed pussy-cat. The rich man's happiness has mental and emotional reactions traceable almost directly to his riches. People, even relatives and close friends, listen long and respectfully to a man who is known to be well-to-do. Acquaintances laugh more quickly and more loudly at his jokes. The community at large accords him a most satisfying respect. And from these things grow subtle developments in the man's character. He gains in self-confidence, in self-respect, and often in self-esteem. He

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looks upon himself more and more as something apart, something ordained. He believes that he is rich by divine right—and in perpetuity.

I was such a man when, at the end of my interview with Thomas Griffin, I learned I was broke.

"The Reverend Thomas Griffin to see you, sir."

If there was one person more than another whom I did not want to see it was the Reverend Thomas Griffin. It wasn't that I did not need spiritual counsel and comfort; it wasn't that I didn't value such things; it *was* that I knew I should not get them from the Reverend Thomas. My relation to him was not spiritual. It was by marriage. He was that vague, unclassified person, the male parent of my daughter-in-law. He was, moreover, an infernal nuisance.

"What shall I say to him, sir?"

"Whatever your conscience will permit," I replied; "so long as I don't have to see him."

The old gray-haired guardian of the gate chuckled at the scintillating wittiness of my reply! He had, in fact, been chuckling at my replies for twenty years, ever since I ceased to be just one of "the gentlemen in the office," and became the boss. Bosses, I reflected, are invariably witty; employees, invariably appreciative. To-day, you see, I was in a cynical, disillusioned mood. Usually, I enjoyed the many perquisites of bossing. I appreciated the soft

richness of the carpet under my feet, the substantial mahogany paneling of the walls, the regardless spaciousness of the president's office. I loved to look down the long directors' table, and see, as if mirrored in its plate-glass top, the faces of smiling, fat-cheeked directors, who gathered there on dividend days to do me honor. I valued—even now, though I desired to be alone—the deferential knock on the outside door that told me that the gray-haired guardian had returned.

"He says, sir, that he must see you. A personal matter, he says, of the utmost importance."

"And what did you say to him?" I asked.

"I says you were in Cincinnati, sir," replied the old man, with the unctuous pride of his profession, "and Mr. Griffin, he says, he doesn't care if you are in Mesopotamia, he must see you."

Of course I had to see him. For three years now it had been a case of "having" to do things for the Reverend Thomas Griffin. I had, in a moment of weakness, right after John had married Elizabeth Griffin, given the Reverend Thomas a stock-market tip and loaned him the money to take advantage of it. He had made between thirty and forty thousand dollars. Since that time my chief job in life, outside of administering an international trading company

of respectable proportions, had been to keep the Reverend Thomas from losing what he had made. An annoying feature of Mr. Griffin's extra-ecclesiastical activities was that he usually invested his money first and sought my advice afterward. Under such circumstances, giving advice meant taking his worthless securities off his hands and getting under the loss myself. Of course I didn't have to do that sort of thing, but I rather enjoyed doing it. It was, like the soft carpet and the mahogany panel, a perquisite of wealth. But to-day—well, the Reverend Thomas was before me.

After the usual hearty in-law greetings, Thomas began to develop his theme. He had, it seems, been speculating of late in the stock of my own company. This stock, since the Armistice, had been subject to the wavering trend of foreign events and policy. Recently, it had reached lower levels than I myself had believed possible. This was the time the Reverend Thomas had chosen to get into the market. And of course he had bought, as conservative people always will, on a margin. This morning, on the news of a premier's resignation, the stock had dropped another twelve points. Thomas's brokers had been on the wire for more money. Thomas was at my office for "advice."

"How much," I asked, with as much interest as I dared to show, "have you lost?"

"Three thousand dollars," he replied dramatically. "What do you advise me to do?"

"I advise you to forget it," I answered. I, too, was trying to forget a few losses—losses greater than three thousand dollars, yes, greater to me than three thousand dollars were to Thomas. And I was very tired. "I am sorry, Thomas, that I cannot help you this time; but, anyhow, you have nothing to worry about. You are well ahead of the game, and can afford to lose better than some others I know." I rose, and extended my hand. "Sorry, old man. Better luck next time. Now I know you'll excuse me. I'm unusually busy."

"Busy!" he hissed. "Do you think you can dismiss my three thousand dollars as easily as that?"

Just then the telephone rang. It was the message I had been expecting, for I, too, had been buying the stock of my own company; not for a speculation, not on a margin, but because I believed in it, because I hoped by my example to turn the tide that had set against it. I was waiting to hear just how badly I had been caught. For a moment I forgot the agony of my visitor in the solemnity of my informant's voice.

"As bad as that?" I managed to say.

"Worse!" replied the broker.

I hung up the receiver. Thomas had taken himself and his wrath into the outer office, to

seek "advice" wherever he could find it; to tell, I had no doubt, every one he saw that I was either a bankrupt or a liar. But I didn't care. I was alone with my news, and my thoughts.

I don't pretend that I thought only of those who would suffer because of me. I was suffering acutely myself. There was not only the actual loss of power and property. That was bad enough. But there was the personal humiliation of the thing. And the shock. There is usually less of drama in business than most of these story writers would have you think. Big deals, whether successful or unsuccessful, often drag interminably, so that when it comes time for the dénouement, every secret has leaked and every suspense has snapped. The winner knows he has won, and the loser knows he is licked long before the curtain falls. Frequently the big scene at the end is played by understudies. But mine had not been that kind of a failure. Mine had come like the traditional bolt of lightning. If it had hit only me, it wouldn't have been so bad; but it seemed to hit everything else, and leave me standing in the devastation. In time, too, I should be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task of reconstruction. I should dread the meetings with my creditors, the struggle with unsympathetic bankers, the cruel publicity of the law.

But now, all these things—the amazing unexpectedness of the blow that had floored me, the terrifying inevitableness of the tasks ahead of me—were as nothing. In that first moment, I was selfish, even in my unselfishness. The thing I feared more than bankruptcy, more than public disgrace, more even than poverty, was *breaking the news to the family!* For my own sake, yes, even more than for theirs, I hated to tell them I was broke.

It wasn't until I reached the door of my own house that I realized that it was the day before Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving! But, impressed as I was by the irony of the coincidence, I was impressed still more deeply by the fact that I must face all the family at one time. John and Mildred would be back from school. Elizabeth would be with John. Even Mother would be there. Did I have the heart to cast my gloom over that glowing family circle? Did I have the nerve? These were the questions that faced me as I turned the key in the familiar door, and let myself, a stranger, an outsider, into my own house. Mechanically I hung up my coat and hat. Slowly, I turned down the passage-way to the living-room door. Without my touching it, the handle of the door turned. With the unclicking of the latch my fading courage disappeared completely. I could not tell them. I could not break in on their happiness—no, not until

after Thanksgiving Day. The door opened.

Where had I heard that voice before?

"No money?" the voice was shouting. "What has he done with all his money? What right has he to be broke?"

"Father," said Elizabeth, "do you think this is a very kind way to break such—such terrible —news?"

"Do you think it was kind to let me lose my three thousand dollars?" shouted the little man.

"Please, Father," said Elizabeth.

"I might have known you'd have no sympathy," he groaned. "What can a man expect from his own flesh and blood?"

I wondered. But, with that pertinent question unanswered, the Reverend Thomas Griffin flung himself across the threshold, and almost into my arms. At the moment I wouldn't have minded embracing the Reverend Thomas. For I realized, with the thankfulness of a reprieved criminal, that he in his selfishness had done an unselfish deed. He had broken the news I feared to break.

So, in the circumstances, my heart warmed even to Thomas Griffin. But I had had enough of his society for one day, and I stepped back into the shadow of the stairs and let him pass. If I hadn't, I should never have overheard the conversation that followed his departure.

"Is this true,"—it was my mother's voice—"what this horrid old man has been saying about my son?"

"I am afraid so," answered my wife.

"Mother, you knew; and didn't tell us?" asked Mildred.

"I didn't know, but I feared," replied my wife. "Your father never mentions business to me, but his partners do. I knew he was risking his personal fortune to save the company. He's always doing that sort of thing, and nobody can stop him when his sense of duty is involved."

"He's game, the governor," commented John; "and I'll bet the only thing he's thinking about is what he is going to do about us. And I think we ought to get busy right away and decide what we are going to do about ourselves. As for Bess and me, we're out. Nobody needs to worry about us, do they, Bess?"

"I should say not!" rejoined the regenerate daughter of the unregenerate Thomas.

John's case was peculiar. I had been too old to go to war. But John, in 1917, was just eighteen. He went. And before he went, he married. Of course, it was a foolish thing to do. John was a freshman at Yale. He was a kid; and so was Elizabeth Griffin. But they loved each other, and lovers, and parents, too, did a lot of foolish things in the spring of 1917. And, after all, why shouldn't they have married? I had plenty of

money. That fact, which had been the answer to everything which John had wanted to do up to that time, was a complete answer to this, his most important and perhaps his last request to me. In my place, you would have done the same thing. And when John returned you would have insisted, as I did, on his going back to college instead of into business. And when the baby came, during John's months of danger in France, you would have loved it.

"But the baby?" interposed Grandma.

"Don't you worry, Grandma," answered John; "we can look out for the baby."

"Well, you haven't had much practice at it," said Grandma, rather tartly.

"Haven't we, though?" said John. "You'd be surprised what we've been up to these last three months."

"Up to college, I thought," sputtered Grandma, who never had approved of the higher education for married men.

"Yes, we went up to college, much against our will, if you remember," replied John; "and when we got up there, we felt like a couple of fools bringing up a baby and going to school and living on Dad. I suppose I should have stuck it. I'd kind of got used to living on Dad. But Elizabeth had too much sense."

"Must have got it from her mother?" was the old lady's sharp comment.

"It was Elizabeth who suggested selling the car," John continued; "and taking the money we got that way and the money Dad put in the bank up there, and buying an interest in that movie theater on Chapel Street."

"Movies? How wonderful!" cried Mildred.

"How terrible!" replied Grandma. "Do you act in them?"

"No, dear," laughed Elizabeth, "we don't do anything half so interesting. But John manages the place afternoons, after classes; and evenings, when he's studying and the baby is sleeping, I sometimes sell tickets."

"The best part of it is," added John, "that it will support us until I get through school and get a regular job. Maybe, by cutting down somewhere, we could do something to help Dad."

There was no word spoken in reply to this last statement, but there was the sound of some one crossing the room and another sound very much like a motherly kiss. I must say I was proud of my son. But then, was it fair to have expected any less of him? He was a man, and it was only the accident of the World War that had kept him from proving it—in "cits" as well as in khaki.

"How much do you suppose I could get for *my* car?" I could hardly believe my ears, but it was Mildred, my fifteen-year-old daughter, who asked this question.

"Enough to send you back to boarding-school another term, old girl," answered John. "You should worry."

"I'm not worrying," she countered, "and I don't want to go back to boarding-school. I'm going to business college. Maybe Dad can't afford to pay a regular stenographer.

"Bless you, Mildred," said Grandma, with a catch in her voice, "your old grandmother has enough to look out for you. I never did like living like a duchess, and I never could spend half the money my son insisted on sending me. And it just worries me, lying there in that bank. Ann," she continued, turning toward my wife, "you take it, and do what you think best with it. I'll be better off without it."

"Thank you, you dear, sweet thing," replied my wife; "but, of course, we couldn't touch a cent of your money. *He* wouldn't be willing."

"Why not?" said the dear old lady proudly. "I am his mother!"

"Well, well," my wife said soothingly, "we don't have to settle that now. Maybe it isn't so bad as we think. Maybe Thomas exaggerated."

"Daddy always was a little nervous," agreed Elizabeth.

"But if things *are* pretty bad," continued my wife, soothingly, "there is one thing we haven't counted on, one person we haven't figured on, in thinking about the future."

"Who's that?" asked all the youngsters at one time.

"Your father," Ann replied. "You children think of him as a sort of favorite of fortune who has had everything given him just as a matter of course. Your grandmother knows better. I know better. I remember the days when we lived in a little apartment, way out of the main part of town, and I did my own work and took care of Johnny, and your father walked halfway to the office to save the extra fare. How that boy worked! What courage he had! You see, children, I know your father, and I know what he can do. I haven't any money laid aside like your grandmother—I wish I had for his sake; but I'm not afraid. I have something that's worth just as much as money, something that may be worth even more right now to him—confidence, belief. It'll be hard, for a while, perhaps for years, but your father will win out!"

"Of course, he'll win out," echoed the older woman; "he's just like his father, and almost as handsome."

The little circle rocked with laughter at Grandma's sally, not because it was funny, or even new,—I suppose Grandma had said it a hundred times to that same audience,—but because laughter is the next best safety-valve to tears.

"Besides," Grandma continued, encouraged by her success, "I think it'll be a very good thing for this family to be poor."

"Absolutely!" agreed John.

"I don't see that," said Mildred. "I think it will be rotten—walking in the rain and wearing short skirts when the style is long, and long when the style is short. I'll hate it. But if Dad can stick it, we can."

"I think Mildred is right," said my wife. "We are all enthusiastic now, and a little proud of being good sports; but when we get down to the everyday grind of it, it isn't going to be a lark. What we are all tackling is a job, a big job."

"Poor Mother," said Mildred, "your part of the job will be hardest—giving up the house where you've lived so long."

"Your mother ought to thank heaven she's rid of this ark," opined Grandma, cheerfully, as if bankruptcy was her heart's desire. "Always was too big—and fancy."

"But, Grandma," said John, "it is home."

There was a long silence as the group reflected on the simple, poignant truth of John's remark. The old house was big. According to modern architectural standards, it *was* fancy. It didn't represent the present tastes or requirements of a single person who lived in it. But it was the symbol of what we were and what we

stood for in the community. To Ann and me, it was the storehouse of our youth, and the natural shelter of our old age. To the children it was the only tangibly rooted thing in their young lives. To all of us, it was home.

"Yes, John, dear," said Elizabeth. "It's going to be awfully hard for you and Mildred; but your mother, in giving up her home, after all these years, has the hardest job of all."

"No," exclaimed my wife. "You mustn't say such things. You'll make me cry. Besides, they're not true. Your father's job is biggest and hardest. He's so—so proud. It's going to hurt him just to know—"

"To know what, Mother?" asked Mildred.

"To know he's broke, of course," opined John.

"Not that," declared my wife; "but just to know that we know. I can't bear"—for the first time, her voice showed signs of failing her—"I can't bear to break the news to him that we know."

"Why should we say anything—if he doesn't?" asked my daughter.

"I don't believe we should," answered her mother; "anyhow, not until after Thanksgiving."

I wanted, of course, to break in on them then and there, to throw my grateful arms around their necks; to tell them that it really wasn't

so bad as they feared; to assure them that I was man enough to find some way to support them without all these sacrifices; but I knew it wouldn't be fair to rob them right away of the joys of their renunciation. So I tiptoed back to the front door, opened it and closed it with a bang, shouted a gay "Hello," and hurled my-myself joyously into the arms of my beloved family. One after another, I kissed them, thankfully. I believe I would have kissed the Reverend Thomas Griffin! What was a million dollars, more or less, to me? I had found a love and a loyalty of which I had not dared to dream. To-morrow, no, to-day was Thanksgiving!

A TARDY THANKSGIVING *

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

"I s'pose you air goin' down to Hannah's to spend Thanksgivin', Mis' Muzzy?"

The old lady who asked the question was seated in Mrs. Muzzy's best haircloth rocking-chair, which had been brought out of the parlor for the occasion. She had a mild, tiny-featured old face, wore a false front of auburn hair, and a black lace cap decorated with purple ribbons, and was knitting—putting new heels into some blue yarn stockings.

The answer she got to her question, delivered in her prim, purring, company tone, made her jump nervously.

"No; I ain't goin' a step—not if I know what I'm about."

The words shot out of Mrs. Muzzy's mouth as if each one had had a charge of powder in its rear, and the speaker went on jerking the stout thread viciously through the seam she was sewing.

* From "A Humble Romance and Other Stories," by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, Publishers.

She was a squarely built woman, compactly fleshy. There was a bright red color on each of her firm, round cheeks; there was not a vague line in her whole face; her mouth opened and shut unhesitatingly and fairly; and she looked out of her small brown eyes directly, with no circumlocution.

"Mebbe you air goin' up to your brother Andrew's then?" ventured the old lady, feebly.

"No, Mis' Field, I ain't a-goin' to Andrew's nuther. I ain't a-goin' nowheres."

"But," purred the old lady, "ain't you afeard you'll be awful lonesome? Lor', I don't know what I should do ef it warn't for Serrah an' her children on a Thanksgivin' Day. To be sure, you ain't got any childern an' grandchildern to go to, but thar's your sister Hannah an' hers, an' Andrew an' his, an' it kinder seems as if brothers and sisters come next."

"Thar' ain't no use talkin'," said Mrs. Muzzy, in a loud, clear-cut voice. "I ain't a-goin' to Hannah's to Thanksgivin', an' I ain't a-goin' to Andrew's to Thanksgivin', an' I ain't a-goin' to hev any Thanksgivin' to hum. I ain't got nothin' to give thanks fur, as I see on. I s'pose ef I could go to meetin' Thanksgivin' mornin', an' hear the sermon, an' then set down to turkey an' plum-puddin', an' be a thankin' the Lord in my heart for lettin' my husband fall off the scaffold in the barn an' git

killed last summer, an' for lettin' my daughter Charlotte die of a quick consumption last spring, an' my son John two year ago this fall, I might keep Thanksgivin' as well as other folks. But I can't, an' I ain't a-goin' to purtend I do. Thar's one thing about it—I ain't a hypocrite, an' never was."

"What air you a-goin' to do, Mis' Muzzy?"

"Do!" Mrs. Muzzy sniffed. "Do! I'm a-goin' to stay to hum, an'—do my pig-work."

The old lady's small-featured countenance, from its very mechanism, was incapable of expressing any very strong emotion, but it took on now a look of gentle horror. She dropped her knitting-work, and her dim blue eyes seemed to take up the whole of her spectacles.

"Lor' sakes, Mis' Muzzy! Pig-work on Thanksgivin' Day! I never heerd anything like it!"

"I don't keer. The pig-work has got to be done, an' I might jest as well do it Thanksgivin' Day as any other. I feel enough sight more like it than eating turkey an' plum-puddin', with all I've been through."

"Ain't you a-goin' to meetin'?"

"No."

"Lor' sakes!"

The old lady fell to knitting again in a mild daze. Mrs. Muzzy would have been too much for her in her best days; now she almost re-

duced her to lunacy. Still, this old lady, who was a neighbor, living about a quarter of a mile distant, felt for her the attraction which weak natures often feel for the strong. She was very fond of dropping in of an afternoon with her knitting-work. There was not so much difference in their ages as one might think at first, either, although Mrs. Muzzy was so much younger looking. Her daughter, who had died the spring before, had been a schoolmate of Mrs. Field's Sarah.

The old lady often accepted the invitation to stay and take a cup of tea, but to-day she shortened her call a little. The "pig-work" on Thanksgiving Day rankled in her mind, and she wanted to go home and tell her daughter Sarah.

After she had gone, Mrs. Muzzy went from the warm sitting-room into her cold, exquisitely neat kitchen, and kindled a fire in the cooking-stove, and made herself a cup of tea. Though she was living alone, every meal was prepared and eaten with religious exactitude. She spread a white cloth over the table, put on some slices of bread, a little dish of quince sauce, and some custard-pie. Then she sat down with a sort of defiant appetite.

She had finished her bread and sauce, and begun on her pie, when the kitchen door, which led directly outdoors, opened, and a girl of twenty or so walked in.

"How d'ye do, Lizzie?" said Mrs. Muzzy.

"Pretty well, Aunt Jane," replied the girl, listlessly, and she sank down in the nearest chair.

She was a tall, slender girl, with dun-colored hair. She had delicate features, and would have been pretty if it had not been for a pitiful droop at the corners of her mouth, the dullness of her eyes, and the dark rings under them.

"Hev some custard-pie?"

"No, thank you; I am not hungry."

"Hev you eat any supper?"

"I don't know—yes, I think so—some bread and butter."

"I saw young Allen go by here 'bout three o'clock, ridin' with that Hammond girl," remarked Mrs. Muzzy, eying her niece sharply.

She only looked at her aunt in the same way she had done before, with an expression of misery too helpless and settled to be augmented.

"Yes," she replied; "I saw them."

"She's a pretty-looking gal. Her cheeks air as red as roses, an' she had on a handsome bunnit."

"Yes."

"It's quite a long time since he's been to see you."

"Yes."

Never was such complete unresistance to a tormentor, if tormentor she meant to be.

"Well, I wouldn't mind anyhow, ef I was you," said Mrs. Muzzy, looking at the girl's weary face, and changing her tone a little. "Let him go ef he wants to. Jest show him you don't keer."

The girl woke up a little at that. "Show him I don't care!" she cried passionately. "He knows I care. It would be a disgrace to me if I didn't care, after I've been going with him for three years, and he leaving me for a new face. It's no use pretending I don't. I don't see why folks tell me to. My heart ought to be broken, and it is."

"I'd hev more sperrit."

"Would you? Well, I'm made different, I suppose," said the girl; and her face took on its listless expression again.

Her aunt finished her second cup of tea, and began to clear away the table.

"Are you coming over to our house Thanksgiving, or Uncle Andrew's?" asked Lizzie, after a little, with some faint appearance of interest.

"I ain't a-goin' nowheres; I'm a-goin' to stay to hum an' do my pig-work."

"Pig-work?"

"Yes; I'm a-goin' to hev 'em killed Tuesday."

Her surprise made Lizzie for a minute look like another girl. "But, Aunt Jane, why? I

never heard of such a thing! Pig-work on Thanksgiving Day!"

Mrs. Muzzy braced herself up defiantly. "Look a-here, Lizzie Munroe," quoth she; "you think you're down as fur as anybody kin be, because you've lost your beau. Well, I've lost my husband, that I'd lived with forty year, an' that was more than any beau, an' I've lost my daughter, both of 'em this year, an' two year ago this fall my son John, an' I don't see as I've got anything to be thankful for. I ain't a-goin' to keep Thanksgivin' Day, an' eat turkey an' plum-puddin'. I feel enough sight more like doin' pig-work, an' I'm a-goin' to."

The girl's dull eyes seemed to catch a gleam from her aunt's. For a minute she looked strangely like her. Mrs. Muzzy's passionate, defiant nature fired her niece's more unresisting, hopeless one.

"Well, Aunt Jane," she said, in a tone like an echo of her aunt's, "I don't wonder you feel so. And—I don't care about eating turkey and plum-pudding, either—I'll come over and help you."

Mrs. Muzzy looked startled for a minute. Perhaps her own spirit reflected in another looked differently to her.

"Well, Lizzie, jest as you like," she said then. "I'll be glad of your help; it's consider'-

ble to do pig-work all alone, an' I've never been used to it''—with a sigh.

''Well, I'll come, Aunt Jane.''

There was a long silence; then the girl took her sad face out of the door, and her aunt, having set away the last of her tea-things, went back into her warm sitting-room; the kitchen fire was going out, and it was growing cold.

Thanksgiving morning, a week later, was gray and cloudy, and the air felt like snow. Mrs. Muzzy's kitchen was full of steaming, glowing heat. She had two immense iron kettles on her stove, and was busily cutting pork into small square bits to try out.

Lizzie was there helping, too. She had come over early. Her sad young face looked sadder this morning. The cold, gray light brought out all the pitiful, drooping lines more plainly. She had probably been weeping instead of sleeping the night before. Her dun-colored hair was put back plainly and neatly; grief did not with her manifest itself in untidiness, though she never crimped her hair now. Lizzie looked like another girl with her hair crimped. Her dark print fitted over her slender shoulders trimly, and she wore a little white ruffle in the neck. She was cutting pork too; her wrists, though small, were muscular, and she worked steadily and effectively, though with a pathetic indifference. Mrs.

Muzzy's firmly set face betrayed little of it, but she really eyed her niece from time to time with furtive uneasiness.

She had an inner consciousness, ever present to herself, that her state of mind was highly culpable, but she undertook the responsibility for herself with sullen defiance. It was another thing, however, to be responsible for a similar state in another. Lizzie, standing there, with her dull, hopeless face, indefatigably cutting pork, seemed to her like the visible fruit of her own rebellious nature.

"Hev you seen Jenny Bostwick lately?" asked she, with a desperate determination to alter her niece's expression.

"No," replied Lizzie, slowly. "Joe hasn't left her. They're always together. I can't bear to go there."

"I know," said Mrs. Muzzy, with quick, sympathetic recognition of the feeling. "I felt that way after John died. I couldn't bear to go into Mis' Mann's, because there was her Edward—she'd had him spared, an' my boy'd been taken."

There was something startling in the frankness, almost shamelessness, of the girl's avowal of envious misery, and her aunt's instantaneous sympathy with it. It was as if their two natures were growing more and more into an evil accord.

About ten o'clock the front door-bell rang. "You go to the door, Lizzie," said Mrs. Muzzy; "you look better'n I."

Lizzie took off her apron, and went obediently. Time was when the tinkle of a door-bell could make her tremble all over, but she was calm enough now. It was six months since George Allen had been to see her, and she had given up all hope of his ever coming again.

Mrs. Muzzy heard the doors open and shut, then a murmur of voices in the sitting-room. One of the voices was unquestionably a man's, low-pitched and earnest. Lizzie's seemed to break into sobs now and then, and once she laughed. Mrs. Muzzy started when she heard that; she had almost forgotten how Lizzie's laugh sounded.

"Who on earth has Lizzie got in there?" she muttered to herself; but she was a woman who could keep her curiosity in check. She went steadily on with her work till the sitting-room door opened and Lizzie came out.

But was it Lizzie?—the girl with those pink cheeks and radiant eyes, and that dimpling mouth? Mrs. Muzzy laid her knife down and stared at her.

"It's George! George!" said Lizzie, in a happy, trembling whisper that seemed almost ready to break out into a scream of joy. "He's come—to—to take me up to his house to dinner.

I'm going home to change my dress and get ready." She was trembling so she could hardly move, but she began pinning on her shawl in joyful haste.

"Lizzie Munroe," said her aunt, sternly, "you don't mean to say you're goin' on with that fellow after all that's happened?"

"Yes, I am; he's come for me." Great tears of pure delight rolled down her cheeks. She had her hood on now, and turned impatiently toward the sitting-room door.

"Come for you! I s'pose ef he'd got married to that Hammond girl an' come for you, you'd gone jest the same!" cried her aunt, with coarse sarcasm.

"Yes, I would!" cried Lizzie, recklessly, her hand on the door-knob.

"I don't b'lieve but what that Hammond girl's given him the mitten, else he wouldn't 'a come. I wouldn't play second fiddle for any feller."

"I would for *him!*" cried Lizzie, as shameless in her happiness as she had been in her misery. She opened the door a crack and peeped in; then she turned to her aunt, her eyes like stars, her cheeks fairly ablaze.

"Good-by, Aunt Jane," she said. "I'm sorry to leave you alone with the pig-work. You'd better change your mind an' go over to Mother's to dinner."

Mrs. Muzzy vouchsafed no reply, and Lizzie went into the sitting-room and shut the door.

Pretty soon her aunt watched her and her truant sweetheart walking down the street. Lizzie was actually hanging on to his arm, in broad daylight.

"I don't see where she took such a disposition," muttered Mrs. Muzzy. "Not from my side. I'd never have made such a fool of myself over a feller."

Then she went on with her pig-work, righteous indignation and scorn against Lizzie mingling in her bosom with rebellion against the will of the Lord.

It had always been her boast that she wasn't one of the kind of women who are forever dropping things, and getting burned and scalded, and cutting her fingers. She thought there was no kind of need of it, if anybody had her wits about her, and didn't fly about like a hen with her head cut off.

She was to prove, however, to-day that her boasting, for one occasion at least, was vain.

She had lifted the first kettle of boiling lard off the stove in safety, and deposited it in the sink. The second—how she did it she never knew, whether the sudden weakening of a muscle or the slipping of a finger occasioned it—she dropped bodily as she was lifting it from the fire.

None of the hot fat went on the stove, or there would have been a worse complication of disasters. It landed on the floor and Mrs. Muzzy's right foot. She lost none of her resolute coolness, with the sudden shock and agony. The kettle was scorching the floor; you could smell the burning paint. She lifted it on to the stove hearth, and cast a distrustful and indignant glance at the molten grease spreading over the floor.

Then she had luckily a pair of scissors within reach. She sat down and cut off, with convulsive shivers of pain, but grim determination, her shoe and stocking. The foot was shockingly burned. She set her lips hard when she saw it.

"A half-winter's job," said she. "Well!"

She dragged herself in her chair with one foot, hitching herself along, into the buttery, to the flour barrel. She powdered the wounded foot thickly with flour, and hitched back.

"There," said she, "that's all I can do. There ought to be oil and bandages and things; but I've got to set still. I wish somebody would come."

Then she sat there in silent endurance, in the midst of the grease, which had cooled, and formed a white coating over the kitchen floor. Her foot was a mass of torture. She did not have long to wait for help, however; she had not

been sitting there half an hour when she heard quick steps on the frozen ground outside.

"Open the door, Jane," called the voice of her sister Hannah, Lizzie's mother. "I've got my hands full."

"I can't," responded Mrs. Muzzy, "you'll hev to do it yourself."

The door opened after a second. The caller, who had a large plate in each hand, stopped short in utter dismay as she took in the aspect of things—her sister, with her floury foot and pale face, and the lard on the floor.

"Why, what hev you done, Jane?" she cried.

Mrs. Muzzy looked up, and actually smiled, the first time her sister had seen her for many a day. "What hev you got thar, Hannah?" asked she.

"Why, I brought you over some Thanksgivin' dinner; but I guess you won't feel like eatin' any now."

"Yes, I do. Bring it here."

"But you want somethin' done more for your foot. Did you tip the hot lard right on to it? Don't it ache? Hadn't you better wait an' eat your dinner after the foot's been seen to?"

"No, Hannah; I want it now. I want to eat some turkey an' plum-puddin' afore I'm an hour older, an' keep Thanksgivin'. I said I wouldn't, but the Lord got ahead of me, an'

I'm glad he has. Bring it here an' I'll eat my dinner, an' then, mebbe, I kin hev somethin' more done for my foot.'

Her sister gave in then, and Mrs. Muzzy, her forehead wrinkled with pain, sat there and ate her Thanksgiving dinner to the very last mouthful.

"Lizzie's feelin' happier," she remarked once.

"Yes; George came to take her to his folks' to dinner."

"Well, I'm glad of it, ef she's goin' to feel any better."

"You would be, ef you was her mother," said her sister simply.

THANKSGIVING AT TODD'S ASYLUM *

Winthrop Packard

People said that if it had not been for that annuity Eph Todd would have been at the poor-farm himself instead of setting up a rival to it; but there *was* the annuity, and that was the beginning of Todd's asylum.

No matter who or what you were, if you were in hard luck, Todd's asylum was open to you. The No. 4 district school-house clock was a sample. For thirty years it had smiled from the wall upon successive generations of scholars, until, one day, bowed with years and infirmities, it had ceased to tick. It had been taken gently down, laid out on a desk in state for a day or two, and finally was in funeral procession to the rubbish-heap, when Eph Todd appeared.

"You're not going to throw that good old clock away?" Eph had asked of the committeeman who acted as bearer.

"Guess I'll have to," replied the other; "I've wound it up tight, put 'most a pint of kerosene

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in it, and shook it till I'm dizzy, and it won't tick a bit. Guess the old clock's done for."

"Now see here," said Eph; "you just let me have a try at it. Let me take it home a spell."

"Oh, for that matter I'll give it to you," the committeeman replied. "We've bought another for the school-house."

A day or two after, the old clock ticked away as soberly as ever on the wall of the Todd kitchen.

"Took it home and boiled it in potash," Eph used to say; "and there it is, just as good as it was thirty years ago."

This was true, with restrictions, for enough enamel was gone from the face to make the exact location of the hour an uncertain thing; and there were days, when the wind was in the east, when the hour hand needed periodical assistance.

"It wasn't much of a job," as Eph said, "to reach up once an hour and send the hand along one space, and Aunt Tildy had to have something to look forward to."

Aunt Tildy was the first inmate at Todd's, and if Eph had possessed no other recommendation to eternal beatitude, surely Aunt Tildy's prayers had been sufficient. She passed his house on her way to the poor-farm on the very day that news of the legacy arrived, and Eph

had stopped the carriage and begged the overseer to leave her with him.

"Are you sure you can take care of her?" asked the overseer, doubtfully.

"Sure?" echoed Eph, with delight. "Of course I'm sure. Ain't I got four hundred dollars a year for the rest of my natural-born days?"

"He's a good fellow, Eph Todd," mused the overseer as he drove away, "but I never heard of his having any money."

Next day the news of the legacy was common property, and Aunt Tildy had been an inmate at Todd's ever since. Her gratitude knew no bounds, and she really managed to keep the house after a fashion, her chief care being the clock.

Then there was the heaven-born inventor. He had dissipated his substance in inventing an incubator that worked with wonderful success till the day the chickens were to come out, when it took fire and burned up, taking with it chickens, barn, house, and furniture, leaving the heaven-born inventor standing in the field, thinly clad, and with nothing left in the world but another incubator.

With this he had shown up promptly at Todd's, and there he had dwelt thenceforth, using a pretty fair portion of the annuity in further incubator experiments.

With excellent sagacity, for him, Eph had obliged the heaven-born inventor to keep his machine in a little shed behind the barn, so that when this one burned up there was time to get the horse and cow out before the barn burned, and the village fire department managed to save the house. Repairing this loss made quite a hole in the annuity, and all the heaven-born inventor had to show for it was Miltiades. He had put a single turkey's egg in with a previous hatch, and though he had raised nary chicken, and it was contrary to all rhyme and reason, the turkey's egg had hatched and the chick had grown up to be Miltiades.

Miltiades was a big gobbler now, and had a right to be named Ishmael, for his hand was against all men. He took care of himself, was never shut up nor handled, and led a wild, nomadic life.

Last of all came Fisherman Jones. He was old now and couldn't see very well, unable to go to the brook or pond to fish, but he still started out daily with the fine new rod and reel which the annuity had bought for him, and would sit out in the sun, joint his rod together, and fish in the dry pasture with perfect contentment.

You would not think Fisherman Jones of much use, but it was he who caught Miltiades, and made the Thanksgiving dinner possible.

The new barn had exhausted the revenues

completely, and there would be no more income until January 1; but one must have a turkey for Thanksgiving, and there was Miltiades. To catch Miltiades became the household problem, and the heaven-born inventor set wonderful traps for him, which caught almost everything but Miltiades, who easily avoided them. Eph used to go out daily before breakfast and chase Miltiades, but he might as well have chased a government position. The turkey scorned him, and grew only wilder and tougher, till he had a lean and hungry look that would have shamed Cassius.

The day before Thanksgiving it looked as if there would be no turkey dinner at Todd's; but here Fisherman Jones stepped into the breach. It was a beautiful Indian-summer day, and he hobbled out into the field for an afternoon's fishing. Here he sat on a log, and began to make casts in the open. Near by, under a savin-bush, lurked Miltiades, and viewed these actions with the scorn of long familiarity. By and by Fisherman Jones kicked up a loose bit of bark, and disclosed beneath it a fine fat white grub, of the sort which blossom into June beetles with the coming of spring. He was not so blind but that he saw this, and, with a chuckle at the thoughts it called up, he baited his hook with it.

A moment after, Eph Todd, coming out of the new barn, heard the click of a reel, and was

astonished to see Fisherman Jones standing almost erect, his eyes blazing with the old-time fire, his rod bent, his reel buzzing, while at the end of a good forty feet of line was Miltiades rushing in frantic strides for the woods.

"Good land!" said Eph; "it's the turkey! Snub him," he yelled. "Don't let him get all the line on you. He's hooked. Snub him! snub him!"

The whir of the reel deadened now, and the stride of Miltiades was perceptibly lessened, and then became but a vigorous up-and-down hop, while the tense line sang in the gentle autumn breeze.

"Eph Todd!" gasped Fisherman Jones, "this is the whoppingest old bass I ever hooked onto yet. Beeswax, how he does pull!" and with the words Fisherman Jones went backward over the log, waving the pole and a pair of stiff legs in the air. The turkey had suddenly slackened the line.

"Give him the butt! Give him the butt!" roared Eph, rushing up. Even where he lay, the fisherman blood in Fisherman Jones responded to this stirring appeal, and as the rod bent in a tense half-circle a race began such as no elderly fisherman was ever the center of before.

Round and round went Miltiades, with the white grub in his crop, and the line above it gripped tightly in his strong beak; and round

and round went Eph Todd, his outstretched arms waving like the turkey's wings, and his big boots denting the soft pasture turf with the vigor of his gallop. In the center Fisherman Jones, too near-sighted to see what he had hooked, had risen on one knee, and revolved with the coursing bird, his soul wrapped in one idea—to keep the butt of his rod aimed at the whirling game.

"Hang to him! Reel him in! We'll get him!" shouted Eph; and, with the word, he caught his toe and vanished into the prickly depths of the savin-bush, just as the heaven-born inventor came over the hill. It would be interesting to know just what scheme the heaven-born inventor would have put in motion for the capture of Miltiades, but just then he stepped into one of his own extraordinary traps, set for the turkey of course, and, with one foot held fast, began to flounder about with cries of rage and dismay.

This brought Eph's head above the fringe of savin-bush again, and now he beheld a wonderful sight. Fisherman Jones was again on his feet, staring in wild surprise at Miltiades, whom he sighted for the first time, within ten feet of him. There was no pressure on the reel, and Miltiades was swallowing the line in big gulps, evidently determined to have, not only the white grub, but all that went with it.

Fisherman Jones's cry of dismay was al-

most as bitter as that of the heaven-born inventor, who still writhed in his own trap.

"Oh, Eph! Eph!" he whimpered, "he's eating up my tackle! He's eating up my tackle!"

"Never mind," shouted Eph; "don't be afraid. I reckon he'll stop when he gets to the pole."

Those of us who knew Miltiades at his best have doubts as to this, but, fortunately, it was not put to the test. Eph scrambled out of his bush, and taking up the chase once more, soon brought it to an end, for Fisherman Jones, his nerve completely gone, could only stand and mumble sadly to himself, "He's eating up my tackle! He's eating up my tackle!" and the line, wrapping about his motionless form, led Eph and the turkey in a brief spiral which ended in the conjunction of the three.

It was not until the turkey was decapitated that Eph remembered the heaven-born inventor and hastened to his rescue. He was still in the trap, but he was quite content, for he was figuring out a plan for an automatic release from the same, something which should hold the captive so long and then let him go in the interest of humanity. He found the trap from the captive's point of view very interesting and instructive.

The tenacity of Miltiades's make-up was further shown by the difficulty Eph and Fisherman Jones had in separating him from his

feathers that evening; and Aunt Tildy was so interested in the project of the heaven-born inventor to raise featherless turkeys that she forgot the yeast-cake she had put to soak until it had been boiling merrily for some time. Everything seemed to go wrong-end-to, and they all sat up so late that Mrs. Simpkins, across the way, was led to observe that "Either some one was dead over at Todd's or else they were having a family party"; and in a certain sense she was right both ways.

The crowning misadventure came next morning. Eph started for the village with his mind full of commissions from Aunt Tildy, some of which he was sure to forget, and in a great hurry lest he forget them all. He threw the harness hastily upon Dobbin, hitched him into the wagon which had stood out on the soft ground over night, and, with an eager, "Get up, there!" gave him a slap with the reins.

Next moment there was a ripping sound, and the heaven-born inventor came to the door just in time to see the horse going out of the yard on a run, with Eph following, still clinging to the reins, and taking strides much like those of *Baron Munchausen's* courier.

"Here, here!" called the inventor; "you've forgot the wagon. Come back, Eph! You've forgot the wagon!"

"Jeddediah Jodkins!" said Eph, as he swung

an eccentric curve about the gate-post; "do you —whoa!—suppose I'm such a—whoa! whoa!— fool that I don't know I'm not riding—whoa!— in a—whoa! whoa!—wagon?" And with this Eph vanished up street in the wake of the galloping horse, still clinging valiantly to the reins.

"I believe he did forget that wagon," said the heaven-born inventor; "he's perfectly capable of it." But when he reached the barn he saw the trouble. The ground had frozen over night, and the wagon-wheels, sunken in it, were held as if in a vise. Eph had started the horse suddenly, and the obedient animal had walked right out of the shafts, harness and all.

A half-hour later Eph was back with Dobbin, unharmed but a trifle weary. It took an hour more and all Aunt Tildy's hot water to thaw out the wheels, and when it was done Eph was so confused that he drove to the village and back and forgot every one of his commissions. And in the midst of all this, the clock stopped! That settled the matter for Aunt Tildy. She neglected the pudding, she forgot the pies, and she let the turkey bake and bake in the overheated oven while she fretted about that clock; and when it was finally set going, after long and careful investigation by Eph, and frantic but successful attempts on the part of Aunt Tildy to keep the heaven-born inventor from ruining it forever, it was the dinner hour.

Poor Aunt Tildy! That dinner was the crowning sorrow of her life. The vegetables were cooked to rags, the pies were charcoal shells, and the pudding had not been made. As for Miltiades, he was ten times tougher than in life, and Eph's carving-knife slipped from his form without making a dent. Aunt Tildy wept at this, and Fisherman Jones and the inventor looked blank enough, but there was no sorrow in the countenance of Eph. He cheered Aunt Tildy, and he cracked jokes that made even Fisherman Jones laugh.

"Why, bless you!" he said, "ever since I was a boy I've been looking for a chance to make a Thanksgiving dinner out of bread and milk. And now I've got it. Why, I wouldn't have missed this for anything!" And there came a knock at the door.

Even Eph looked a trifle blank at this. If it should be company! "Come in," he called.

The door was pushed aside and a big, steaming platter entered. It was upheld by a small boy, who stammered diffidently, "My moth—moth—mother thaid she wanted you to try thum of her nith turkey."

"Well, well!" said Eph; "Aunt Tildy has cooked a turkey for us to-day, and she's a main good cook—" Eph did not appear to see the signs the heaven-born inventor was making to him—"but I've heard that your mother does

things pretty well, too. We're greatly obliged." And Eph put the steaming platter on the table.

"She thays you c-c-can thend the platter home to-morrow," stammered the boy, and, stammering himself out, he ran into another. The other held high a big dish of plum-pudding, from which a spicy aroma filled the room. Again the heaven-born inventor made signs to Eph.

"Our folks told me to ask if you wouldn't try this plum-pudding," said the new-comer. "They made an extra one, and the cousins we expected didn't come, so we can spare it just as well as not."

It seemed as if Eph hesitated a moment, and the inventor's face became a panorama. Then he took the boy by the hand, and there was an odd shake in his voice as he said:

"I'm greatly obliged to you. We all are. Something happened to our plum-pudding, and we didn't have any. Tell your ma we send our thanks."

There was a sound of voices greeting in the hallway, and two young girls entered, each laden with a basket.

"Oh, Mr. Todd," they both said at once, "we couldn't wait to knock. We want you to try some of our Thanksgiving. It was Mother's birthday, and we cooked extra for that, and we've got so much. We can't get all ours onto the table. She'll feel real hurt if you don't."

Somehow Eph couldn't say a word, but there was nothing the matter with the heaven-born inventor. His speech of delighted acceptance was such a good one that before he was half done the girls had loaded the table with good things, and, with smiles and nods, and good-byes, slipped out as rapidly and as gaily as they had come in. It was like a gust of wind from a summer garden.

The table, but now so bare, fairly sagged and steamed with offerings of Thanksgiving. Somehow the steam got into Eph's eyes and made them wet, till all he could do was to say whimsically:

"There goes my last chance at a bread-and-milk Thanksgiving."

But now Aunt Tildy had the floor, with her faded face all alight.

"Eph Todd," she said, "you needn't look so flustrated. It's nothing more than you deserve, and not half so much either. Ain't you the kindest man yourself that ever lived? Ain't you always doing something for everybody, and helping every one of these neighbors in all sorts of ways? I'd like to know what the whole place would do without you! And now, just because they remember you on Thanksgiving Day, you look like—"

The steam got into Aunt Tildy's eyes now, and she sat down again—just as there came an-

other knock at the door—a timid sort of knock this time.

The heaven-born inventor's face widened in beatified smiles of expectation at this, but Eph looked him sternly in the eye.

"Jeddediah Jodkins!" he said; "if that is any more people bringing things to eat to this house, they'll have to go away. We can't have it. We've got enough here now to feed a—a boarding-school."

The heaven-born inventor sprang eagerly to his feet. "Don't you do it, Eph," he said, "don't you do it. I've just thought of a way to can it."

A thinly clad man and woman stood at the door which Eph opened. Both looked pale and tired, and the woman shivered.

"Can you tell me where I can get work," asked the man, doggedly, "so that I can earn a little something to eat? We are not beggars," —he flushed a little through his pallor,—"but I have had no work lately, and we have eaten nothing since yesterday. We are looking—"

The man stopped, and well he might, for Eph was dancing wildly about the two and hustling them into the house.

"Come in!" he shouted. "Come in! Come in! You're the folks we are waiting for! Eat? Why, goodness gracious! We've got so much to eat we don't know what to do with it."

He had them in chairs in a moment and was

piling steaming roast turkey on their plates. "There!" he said, "don't you say another word till you have filled up on that. Folks," and he turned to the others, "here's two friends that have come to stay a week with us and help eat turkey. Fall to! This is going to be the pleasantest Thanksgiving we've had yet!"

And thus two new inmates were added to Todd's asylum.

BETTY AND THANKSGIVING *

Harriet Prescott Spofford

Unwished and unwelcome, the baby in her coming made an unpleasant interruption in the habits of the Westley household. Mr. Westley held a clerical position of trust, which allowed him liberty after bank hours to drive the quiet old pony, to make his pretty garden, to spend long evenings with his wife and over his books.

They had been reading Dante together, and when the baby really arrived they could think of no better name for her than Beatrice; for, after she was here, being their own, she became something beatific. She had not, however, been so unwelcome to the mother. Indeed, as the happy woman sat at her delicate sewing, she counted every thread lest there might be a little daughter who should judge her mother's stitches; and many a thrill of love and joy trembled through her as she thought of her new possession. And when her husband saw something of this and divined more, if he could not enter into the joy of his wife, yet he was

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determined that her remotest wish should be gratified; and, for the first thing, he sent to a certain convent for a layette like the one the nuns had made for his employer's wife, extravagant though it was. Perhaps the sight of the little garments stirred something responsive in Mr. Westley's heart, for he thought with half a pang of pity of the gentle nuns drawing their needles in and out, never to come nearer than that to the dreams and bliss of motherhood with which he saw his wife now smiling to herself.

He was glad that she was happy, and yet a little vexed that she should be willing to have their pleasant way of life disturbed. And while there was enough in his income for two, three would make a difference. No more joyous excursions on the spur of the moment, on a holiday, no more coming round with the pony when an unexpected early closing allowed. He had, of course, made the best of the pony, but he had always hoped to own a horse at some time that would leave the winged horse of fable behind. But now, with swollen house-bills, of course, with doctors, dentists, nurses, with an education looming in the background, there was nothing of that sort for him. No more of the pleasant evenings with reading aloud and music—there would be a different sort of music. No, so far as he was concerned, there was no welcome for

poor little Beatrice—although no sooner had she come, gurgling, cooing, laughing, loving, than that lofty name was forgotten in darling little Betty. For unwelcome or not, when she arrived Betty brought love with her. She loved every one and every thing herself; stretched up her little arms with sweet, inarticulate cries to the sunshine and the leaves, gave her father heavenly smiles and babblings of pure music, would rest in no arms but his from the moment he was in the house, and so insisted on her right to be loved that she won the day and was worshiped.

Nothing was too fine or good for little Betty. Although the mother might expostulate, her cloak must be of white broadcloth, trimmed with white ostrich feathers, such as her father had seen some young merchant princess wearing; her little clasp-pins must be of gold and pearls; her crib, her baby-carriage, her toys, of the rarest and costliest; and he insured his life additionally for Betty's benefit before she was six months old. He said she should have the best advantages; no child of the multimillionaires should have a better education than she should receive; if she had a voice, no one less than Marchesi should train it; she should travel; he would have promised her wings from the lands beyond the Delectable Mountains if he had known of any way of finding them.

But Betty was on the way to find such wings for herself. From the moment that she could manifest her little individuality it was a sweet one. Her dear shapeless sentences were like snatches of melody; a taste of her dainty biscuit was offered to all; her lip trembled if any one was hurt; she walked off triumphantly in her first steps because she trusted the father and mother, the one letting go, the other beckoning; love and sympathy made the keynote of her little being. And so she became the first thought of her father when he opened his eyes and looked over to the crib where she lay wide awake, playing with her fingers, silent and waiting. She was his last thought when he fell asleep. He dreamed of her all night, and her lovely face came between him and the lines of the ledger all day. And when she began to call people by name, to talk somewhat intelligibly, to sing her little broken tunes, the house seemed full of people, full of joy.

Somehow Mr. Westley's happiness in the child made him light-hearted in every direction; he felt his purse equal to every demand, and that he could afford a great deal which formerly would have seemed impossible. Betty's father must appear as became Betty's father; Betty's mother ought to have a diamond star for her hair when they went to the opera—a single night at the opera had been a great piece of

expenditure once; they must have a season-ticket this year, if only to celebrate the fact of Betty's existence; and if they went by way of the electrics, they must have compensation in the shape of the fast horse and the runabout that Mr. Westley bought. There must be some new things in the house, too; some choice table-linen and other damask, a Dresden tea-set, some heavier silver, some rugs—Betty must grow up accustomed to a certain fine manner of life and seeing only the best about her. Betty never should have the feeling of inferiority that had filled his own early days in view of what others had and he had not.

Thus it came about that in a couple of years Mr. Westley had spent his little reserve, all but the one bond that he had treasured as a nest-egg; and he found himself in debt to an extent that soon grew very perplexing, and the thought and vexation of which he could escape only when he came home and took Betty in his arms.

Mr. Westley did not like to sell the bond, which was almost all the patrimony that Betty had if he were taken,—although, to be sure, her mother's diamonds were always an investment. Yet he had a certain pride or vanity in having his wife think him competent and successful; he could not ask her to give that sunburst back. And the bond had stood between them and the trouble and expense of possible illness. He was

very much distressed—people could not be expected to wait forever for their money.

One day, outside the counting-room, Mr. Westley heard some one talking of coppers, of the Old Burnished mine, and of the probability that shares bought to-day at fifty would be selling at a hundred and fifty in less than three months. Well, here was a chance not only to pay his debts, but to make his fortune. He had the thousand-dollar bond; it would give him margin for a hundred shares and more. If Van Arcy was in it, it ought to be a good thing. And, on inquiring, it seemed so safe that he ventured; he bought a hundred shares of Old Burnished. It went up that month to a fraction over eighty; he had made three thousand dollars. What an easy, what a delightful way to make money! Why not make a little more? He could put up his whole four thousand for margin and buy—how many hundred shares?—for a rise. And the rise was bound to come; there was no doubt of that. Why, look at the names behind it! He had a conversation with one of the principal manipulators of the stock, a man who flattered him by supposing he had the means to embark on the affair, and he had told him of the ore in sight at the Old Burnished, and the increasing use of copper in all the electrical appliances, and had declared that money in that stock was as safe as if it were in the Bank of

England, and would presently be bringing three hundred per cent on the investment. Oh, certainly here was the chance of his life! To let such an opportunity go by was to invite beggary! He would put in his four thousand, and yet even that would bring little more than a pittance. By hook or by crook he must have more! It was the one moment when the pendulum swung between riches and poverty. For Betty's sake he must have more!

But how? He had not another penny in the world. To ask his wife for the diamonds—he hadn't the face. All the less that he had not told his wife anything of what he had done, and was not sure she would understand, and was doubtful would she approve. Women, he said to himself, are as sensitive where money is concerned as the stock market itself. No, he would say nothing to Evangeline.

He wondered, as he sat and bit the handle of his pen, if his employer could be induced to lend him anything. But no, he knew very well that he would first demand security, and that moreover he would look askance at one of his clerks who should speculate. It might end by his losing his place, indeed.

Mr. Westley was very blue; he had not been so blue since before Betty was born. He saw fortune within reach of his hands, and his hands tied, the happy moment slipping by. There

was no one to whom he could turn for help.

To change the figures in the books and use the ready money,—that is, to borrow it, he checked himself,—that would take too long; the chance would be gone. And somehow that meddling with the books was not to his mind. But how then? To be sure, to be sure! Why, he had in his charge the funds of the Curzon Club, of which he was treasurer. Yes,—why not? It was so safe. Safer than the Bank of England. And, the funds being in his hands, what difference was there between leaving them in the bank and putting them temporarily in shares of the Old Burnished, shares selling now at more than half again as much as when he bought in?

It was a wealthy club, one to which in reality a man in his circumstances had no right to belong. But he had had the opportunity to join it, and had done so that Betty's father might have the best sort of acquaintances. The yearly assessments had just been paid, and the amount now in hand was a very considerable sum. It showed how he was trusted that so important a charge should be given him.

Well, he would not be betraying the charge by putting it in a safe place—safe as the Bank of England. And when the stock touched a hundred and fifty—or even a little before, he would sell out, replace the funds in the bank, and the difference would be his, the difference that

would mean to him almost boundless wealth. Thus Mr. Westley reasoned. It is true, his thoughts ran on, there were casuists who would say the profit should belong to the club. But that was really splitting a hair too fine. Besides, it would be impossible to give it to the club without explaining how he had come by it, and explanations—well, in this case explanations were impossible. And why were they impossible? Mr. Westley's face was very white and pinched. Why? Because he was stealing the money! If only for a week, a day, an hour, he was stealing the money. He had the bank-book and the check-book of the club's account already in his hand. But suddenly and automatically he thrust them back into their pigeonhole, and then his face turned as crimson as if he had been caught filching money from a till.

But, nevertheless, far in his inner consciousness Mr. Westley knew that he was going to use that money. Not, he said, that he had the least idea of taking it for himself, of taking it to keep, of appropriating it: he was merely going to use it and replace it. What difference would it make to the club whether it were this money or some other money so long as the amount remained the same? And when the whole thing was so absolutely safe! Why it would be childish, it would be folly, it would be deliberately choosing poverty, to let such a chance pass. If

fate and fortune gave him this one opportunity, and he neglected it, he would deserve never to have another. Of course he would borrow and use the money! There is nothing succeeds like success! Faint heart never won fair lady, he said.

If none of this asseveration quite convinced or satisfied Mr. Westley, still his intention remained the same. By and by, in the happy years to come, he said again, he would be laughing at this faint-heartedness. There was nothing doing to-morrow; it was Thanksgiving Day, and the stock market would be closed; but later,— he locked his desk and went home, not exactly treading on air, but feeling already the potentiality of riches.

Mr. Westley had not been brought up a pagan. He had always been a church-going man, and had looked forward with pure pleasure to the day when little Betty should walk along demurely between her mother and himself, the bell tolling silverly overhead. He had been in the habit of reading a psalm or some chosen verses from the Bible with his wife every night. And there were certain hymns which always gave him a glad tremor when he heard their first words, their first tones. The choir was practising for the morning service in a church as he went by that evening; once he would have stopped to let the music pouring out

work its miracle,—it was a tune set to one of the joyous themes of the Seventh Symphony,—but this evening he hurried on. He was in a hurry to be at home, he said, and to have his frolic with Betty before her bedtime. He had sent the turkey earlier in the day; he only stopped to buy some grapes and candies for the table and a sugar reindeer for Betty, and sprang along eagerly through the frosty air of the early dark.

He was delayed, however, after he reached his car by a block on the line, and Betty had had her supper and her frolic before he arrived. A book lay open upon the table. He could not have told you why, he hardly knew he did, but he felt a quiver of repulsion as he passed it. The mother had been quieting the child for sleep, and had been reading to her, before taking her upstairs, "Suffer little children to come unto me."

He saw, through the dining-room doorway, the silver bowl and spoon, and the high chair pushed back as Betty had finished her evening meal; he could see, as if they were before him, the golden hair, the face like a pink-and-white blossom, the laughing mouth; and he took the stairs three at a bound in order to be there before Betty should have closed those blue eyes.

But at the half-open door he paused. Betty in her long white nightgown knelt on the rug at

her mother's knee, the firelight sparkling over her in a sort of aura, and leaving all the rest of the room in shadow. Her dimpled hands were folded, her face upturned like a flower to the light; her eyes, blue as heaven, lifted, as if in her undoubting faith she saw in the upper depths—as beautiful, as innocent as a little angel.

It seemed to him in that moment as if the host and hierarchy of heaven were looking into that room. And he was the father of that little angel! His heart stood still. What right had he in such a possession? If there were justice to be found, it would be taken from him before the wings were soiled by contact. Looking at the child he grew cold and faint. He leaned against the jamb of the door to recover his breath, that seemed to tremble on his stiff lips. In that instant the future opened as if by the gleam of a lightning-flash, and he saw simple provision with white honor side by side with wealth that had a stain on every page of its check-book. He saw himself walking to church with his wife and Betty between them, as he had dreamed of doing, Betty looking up to him as to a perfect being; and he saw himself rolling along in his carriage, with furtive glances to right and left, daring to meet no one's eyes—Betty's father a thief! If no one in all the world ever knew of it, yet that her heritage!

He crept back on tiptoe, like some one making off with plunder; he snatched his coat and hat again and closed the door softly behind him. He had no conscious idea where he was going, but he walked swiftly, and started suddenly to find himself on the steps of the club, behind the doors in the inner office where a couple of the managers were busy over some of the regulations. "Oh, by the way," he said, and his voice seemed to him to come without his volition, "isn't there an official meeting to-night? I find I have to resign my treasurership. I have all I can attend to without that. Oh, yes, that's final! And some one else must put his neck in the yoke. Will you see to it, Van Arcy? I'll write out my resignation now if you'll hand it in. And if the new treasurer will come round on Friday, I'll hand him the books and accounts. There. I'll do as much for you. I've something on to-night and am in a little hurry." And then he found himself in the street again, all as if a force quite outside of himself moved and directed him.

A little voice piped in John Westley's ear next morning, "Is you awake, Father? Happy Sanksgivin'! Betty yants to get in youse bed."

"The best Thanksgiving I ever had," he said, as she crept over and cuddled in his arms. "The best Thanksgiving," he said to himself,

"that a man could ask for. Thanksgiving for having passed through the fire with only the garments scorched. Yes, thank God, that by reason of Betty, Betty's father is an honest man! And to think," he said again presently, with the little silken head under his chin, "that there ever was a time when Betty was looked upon as a misfortune. Betty, God's best blessing!"

It was on his way back to the counting-room after lunch on Friday that Van Arcy met him. "Heard the news?" he asked. "The Old Burnished has declared an extra, and the stock is going up like a balloon. A hundred and twenty-five when I dropped the tape, and still rising!"

Mr. Westley's heart boomed in his ears like a great bell. For an instant before he regained control of himself he felt a hot wave surging over him. "Let me see," Van Arcy was saying. "You went in there at fifty, didn't you? I remember advising you. Hope you made a good thing of it!"

"A mighty good thing!" said Mr. Westley, and went on his way rejoicing.

OLD TOM'S THANKSGIVING DINNER *

William Thomas Whitlock

Old Tom and I were prospecting along the eastern slopes of the Maricopa Range. I had furnished the grub-stake and had gone along more for recuperation and experience than in hope of making a lucky strike.

Early one morning on our third day out from Barstown a shiftless, half-grown waif named Hank whom I had at times befriended stalked into camp and demanded something to eat. In some manner he had learned of our expedition and then had stealthily followed our trail across the desert until he was sure that we would not send him back to the settlements. "Ain't had nothin' but cactus pears and some berries since I left Barstown," he said, grinning impudently.

The presence of the boy enraged old Tom. "We've only brought grub enough fer two," he said. "With another mouth to feed we'll have to cut short our trip." He turned to me. "Give him a good square meal and provisions for three

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days and tell him to vamose back to where he come from."

To my astonishment Hank's bold eyes suddenly filled with tears. "Ain't got no place nor nobody to go to," he said and gulped. "And I want to be with him." He nodded toward me.

His attitude touched me, for all that I had ever given him were some of my old clothing, a few coins, and a meal now and then. "Oh, all right," I said hastily. "But you must do your share of the work about the camp to pay for your keep."

Hank nodded his head and then began ravenously to eat the food that old Tom had grudgingly placed before him.

Although Hank naturally was lazy, he faithfully performed the tasks that we assigned to him. But his appetite was enormous, and at meals old Tom would regard him with dismay.

"Every meal that young one devours shortens our prospectin' tour a whole day," he grumbled. "Oh, yes, I know we're doin' very well with the game we manage to kill, but we're up here to look for minerals, not to be hunting grouse and rabbits."

By the first of October we had traveled for weeks without discovering any outcroppings of "minerals." Old Tom worked diligently over the plateaus and gulches of the foothills and often would return to camp weary and de-

jected; but the next morning he would always rise with renewed vigor and hope. "I shore do want to find somethin' this trip," he declared. "I'm gettin' too old to be rangin' over these hills much longer."

A fortnight later we crossed the foot-hills and arrived at the rugged inclines of the Maricopas. Hank and I were as brown as Indians; our muscles were like steel, and both of us were enjoying the long tramps during the day, the hearty meals in camp, and the cool, sleep-inducing breezes of the elevations.

But the old prospector was looking haggard and worn over his failure to discover traces of minerals. "Do you happen to know what day of the month this is?" he asked one night.

"Must be the 26th of October," I replied.

"Humph. Four weeks to Thanksgivin'."

"Why, I had almost forgotten. What do you know about Thanksgiving?" I inquired, laughing.

"Warn't I born and raised in old Vermont? Reckon a feller ever fergits them feasts of turkeys and stuffin', pumpkin pies an' mince-meat? And I ain't never failed to celebrate the day with some sort of extra feed. 'Bout time to knock off work and hit the trail fer the cabin," he added musingly.

"The cabin?" I asked in wonder.

But he had lapsed into one of his long, tight-lipped silences. He did not mention the subject again for several days. Then one night he ordered Hank to round up the pack-burros early the next morning and to strike the tent while breakfast was preparing. He routed me from my blankets before daybreak, and soon after the sun came peeping up over the distant peaks we were on the march.

For ten days we traveled to the north and west. The trail ascended through the chaparral thickets and then, crossing the stunted cedar belt, finally wound along near the crest of an apparently endless spiny ridge. Old Tom seemed to have forgotten his eagerness to discover minerals. He made frequent halts to hunt for game, and he continued to grumble over the amount that Hank ate.

The old prospector was an excellent cook, and he refused to allow either Hank or me to aid in preparing the meals.

"You'd waste more than you'd cook," he declared. "And I never allow nobody to mess round my grub-box anyway."

Hank's task was to rustle firewood, build the cook-pit, and keep the blaze going beneath the pans and kettles. As he squatted near the fire he would observe closely each ingredient that the cook used and also the way he prepared the food; indeed, his manner was so eager and

inquisitive that the old man frequently was irritated.

"Go 'long away from here," old Tom said to him one night. "Can't you wait till I get things ready to eat, you hungry coyote cub!"

Hank retreated, somewhat abashed; but I noticed with amusement that he continued to watch old Tom's preparations as if the mere sight of food had made him ravenous.

Late in the afternoon of a hard day's march old Tom paused on a little stony shelf and waited until Hank and I had brought up the pack-animals. "That's the cabin," he announced, pointing to a wider ledge a short distance farther up the mountains. "The only home I own in the world. Built that shack ten years ago—hauled the logs from the cedar strip on burros' backs and laid the stonework myself. Every year I come up here for my Thanksgivin' feast. If I've had good luck an' plenty of provisions, I sometimes stay till spring."

Half an hour later we had scrambled up to the stony bench and were gazing about us. Away in the distance to the south and east, spread out fanwise and glistening in the last rays of the sinking sun, lay the desert. To the north rose a chain of snow-capped peaks. To the south and west the bare, serrated ridge of the Maricopas extended for miles. The cabin, a rude building with a huge fireplace, sat near the

center of the bench. In the rear a jumble of brownish boulders formed an irregular bald knob. It would be hard to imagine a more isolated, lonely spot.

A few yards from the front door a precipitous cañon dropped to a mountain stream, and on the opposite side the wall rose to another bench. Though the stream was only a tiny trickle among the rocks, I knew from the marks on the walls of the cañon that more than once terrific floods, that cloud-bursts or the sudden melting of the snow-fields had caused, had poured through the gorge.

On entering the cabin, old Tom began immediately to rummage among some shelves in one corner of the room. "Guess we've got a-plenty with what's here," he said at last. "I left these things last year, sealed up tight in cans so the pack-rats couldn't get to 'em. I've brought cranberry jell and canned pumpkin, and I managed to save a few potatoes from Hank. Now all we need is a turkey."

"A turkey!" I exclaimed in derision. "I guess they're not very plentiful round here."

"I have shot 'em wild down in the cedar groves. That's one reason I built my cabin here. Some years I fail to discover 'em and have to go without; but Thanksgivin' is two weeks off, and now I intend to put in every day until I find one or know they ain't to be found."

For a week old Tom searched the cedar strips without bringing home even a partridge. I took the second rifle and wandered over the ledges, but I was no more fortunate than he.

One night he returned home with an especially worried and dejected air. "Nary a sight nor sign of a turkey, nor a grouse nor quail neither," he said. "And we're going to have company for Thanksgivin' too."

"Company!" I cried.

"Thar's a little minin' settlement about ten miles to the southwest," he explained. "I tramped all the way down thar and back in hopes they might have shipped in a bird or two. But they didn't have no meat in the whole village but salt pork. When I told why I wanted a turkey, two or three of the mine bosses hinted they'd like to bring their wives and come up to the cabin Thanksgivin' Day just to break the monotony of existence in a minin' camp."

"How about provisions? We sha'n't have enough left to continue prospecting," I protested.

"Oh, they'll bring plenty of canned stuff, and dishes, too. But we've just got to have a turkey or fresh meat of some sort."

"If we had another gun, I might go out and hunt, too," Hank suggested timidly.

"Huh! You wouldn't find nothin', and you'd come back with an appetite like a bear."

On the following morning, however, Hank pleaded so earnestly that I allowed him to take my rifle and depart, while I remained at the cabin. He returned at nightfall, empty-handed; so did old Tom. "Reckon it must be the weather that makes birds so scarce in these parts," said the prospector. "Never saw it so warm this time of year. When grouse and quail get on their winter coat o' feathers they can't endure much heat.

"Day after to-morrow is Thanksgivin'," he continued moodily. "I'd ought to stay home and bake my pumpkin pies, but I'm goin' to cross the cañon, climb up to the edge of the snow-fields, and see if the grouse and quail ain't migrated to a colder climate. If I don't find none to-day, I reckon we'll have to make out on canned salmon instead of a big fat gobbler."

Contrary to his custom, old Tom failed to return at sunset. Hank and I sat up until midnight waiting for him. The boy pleaded insistently to be allowed to prepare supper. He said that he was starving; he knew I must be hungry, and he was sure that the old man would not scold much if he found a hot meal all ready for him after climbing over the snow-fields.

Out of patience at last, I prepared a cold lunch, and then, somewhat worried over the absence of the aged prospector, we went to bed.

When I awoke the next morning Hank had

disappeared, and my rifle was missing from the rack on the wall. I spent a long, lonesome day at the cabin. The weather was uncomfortably warm; the burning sun glared upon the stony slope and ridges. The afternoon wore on, but neither of my companions put in an appearance. When the mountain twilight had deepened into dusk I built a rousing fire in the dooryard. Toward morning I must have fallen asleep.

At daybreak a loud, rumbling roar that seemed to come from the cañon roused me. Creeping to the brink of the ledge, I peered down. The gorge was half filled with a torrent of swirling, muddy water! I was creeping cautiously back from the dizzying sight, when a shout made me glance across the gulch.

Old Tom was standing on the opposite rim; in his hands were two small quail, which he was brandishing with an air of disgust. "No chance to git across," he shouted above the roar of the flood. "Mile wide down below—snow still meltin' up on the peaks—may last for days—" He paused and stared stupidly at something on my side of the cañon.

I turned to behold Hank stumbling up the trail to the cabin. In his arms he clasped what I first mistook for a bear cub; then I saw that it was a big black wild-turkey gobbler!

Hank staggered across the bench and dropped the bird at my feet. "Shot him over in cedar

grove on west ridge,'' he panted. ''Found a turkey roost about sunset. Been all night luggin' this big fellow over the hills and gulches. Where's old Tom?''

I nodded to the solitary figure on the opposite bench. The old prospector was striding back and forth and waving his arms wildly. ''Bird like that—company fer dinner—nobody to cook—''

Hank made a megaphone of his hands. ''Don't worry about that,'' he shouted. ''I'll cook the dinner.''

The old man threw out his hands and sank upon a boulder in an attitude of despair.

''All I'll ask you to do is to dress that turkey,'' Hank said to me curtly. Then he strode into the cabin.

Our guests arrived on a relay of saddle-ponies late in the forenoon. Mr. Fink, the owner of the mines, and three of his employees brought their wives. When I had explained what had happened the men turned their attention to the prospector, and the women hastened into the cabin to help Hank to prepare the meal.

But the boy rejected all offers of assistance.

''I'm cookin' this dinner,'' he declared with the irritable manner of old Tom when any one disturbed him in his culinary labors.

Hank did, however, allow us to arrange a table in the center of the room and to provide

seats from boxes and kegs. Then he drove us from the house into the pleasant autumn sunshine.

Old Tom was wandering restlessly along the bench on the opposite wall of the cañon. He gave little heed to the jests and condolences that we shouted across to him; he seemed to be absorbed in examining the formation of the ledge.

"He is probably prospecting to keep his mind off the dinner," said Fink, laughing.

"It is simply too bad that there's no way to send him some of the food," said Mrs. Fink. "I shall not enjoy my dinner for thinking of that poor old man sitting over there hungry."

"He is getting ready to roast one of the quails," replied the mine owner. "And perhaps we can save something for him to eat after the flood goes down."

We thought that dinner never would be ready, and we discussed the advisability of overpowering the youthful cook and taking matters into our own hands.

About two o'clock Hank opened the door. "I've thought of something," he announced eagerly. "We can tie a string to a bullet and shoot it over to old Tom. Then we can hitch on a heavier string and then a rope until we have a cable across the cañon. I'll fill one of the pack

canisters with grub, ring it on the rope, and let it slide to the opposite rim—''

''Say, you let me attend to that,'' interrupted Adams, one of the miners. ''I've seen that done before.''

Old Tom ceased his restless ''prospecting'' to listen to our plan. ''Don't reckon the dinner'll be fit to eat,'' he shouted. ''But mebbe it'll be better than roasted quail 'thout salt.''

Fortunately, there were several balls of twine in the cabin. Adams took the bullet and part of the charge from a rifle cartridge and replaced them with two or three solid wads. Then he nested the string carefully on the ground and, tying one end of it to a cleaning-rod, slipped the rod into the barrel of the gun. The arrangement reminded me of a whaler's harpoon-gun that I had once seen.

Shooting the string across the gorge was a simple affair, but getting a cable long enough to bridge the cañon was not so easy; we hunted up and spliced together every foot of lariat, hobble-rope, and other rope round the cabin. Nor could we find an elevation high enough to allow the canister to slide by gravity to old Tom.

''Shoot another string across for a tow-line,'' said Hank, who was filling the canister with food.

We glanced at one another rather foolishly; the suggestion was so simple and obvious.

At last everything was ready. Old Tom wound his end of the line round a boulder, and we fastened our end to the logs of the cabin, Hank placed the canister in a canvas bag and attached a large harness-ring to it so that it would slip along the rope. We hooked on the tow-line and signaled for Tom to haul away. Would the cable hold? Was the tow-line strong enough? We held our breath as the harness-ring slid over the spliced places in the rope. The canvas bag with its precious contents seemed to hover for hours above the roaring, hissing flood; but at last old Tom reached out a long arm and grasped it. We gave a hearty cheer and then rushed into the cabin for our own feast.

Well, that was the best dinner I ever ate. The turkey was roasted to a turn, and there were mashed potatoes and gravy, oyster dressing, fried corn, cranberry jelly, and pumpkin pies. Hank had even baked a batch of hot biscuits in a camp skillet.

"Where in the world did you learn to cook?" I asked him.

"From watching old Tom about the campfire," he replied. "I like good things to eat, and I've always wanted to know how to cook. So I took lessons from one of the finest cooks in the land."

"You never saw him roast a turkey or bake pumpkin pies!"

"No, but we've both heard him dozens of times tell how he did it," replied Hank, laughing.

When we could eat no more we sauntered out into the yard to hear what old Tom thought of the dinner. The prospector had finished his meal and once more was striding thoughtfully back and forth along the ledge. To our astonishment he had driven three stakes at regular intervals into the crevices of the rock. He glanced up and beheld us assembled on the opposite bank. "Struck it at last!" he shouted above the rumble of the flood. "Outcroppin's of the richest silver veins in the whole country! Right here across from my cabin all these years—while I was searchin' everywhere!"

"Stake out claims for the rest of us, Tom," the miners yelled excitedly.

Old Tom pointed impressively in turn to each of the stakes. "One fer me, one fer my partner, and one fer Hank! Boy who can cook a meal like that! Almost as good as I could do myself!"

THE NIGHT BEFORE THANKSGIVING *

Sarah Orne Jewett

I

THERE was a sad heart in the low-storied, dark little house that stood humbly by the roadside under some tall elms. Small as her house was, old Mrs. Robb found it too large for herself alone; she only needed the kitchen and a tiny bedroom that led out of it, and there still remained the best room and a bedroom, with the low garret overhead.

There had been a time, after she was left alone, when Mrs. Robb could help those who were poorer than herself. She was strong enough not only to do a woman's work inside her house, but almost a man's work outside in her piece of garden ground. At last sickness and age had come hand in hand, those two relentless enemies of the poor, and together they had wasted her strength and substance.

* From "The Queen's Twin and Other Stories" by Sarah Orne Jewett. By permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, Publishers.

She had always been looked up to by her neighbors as being independent, but now she was left, lame-footed and lame-handed, with a debt to carry and her bare land, and the house ill-provisioned to stand the siege of time.

For a while she managed to get on, but at last it began to be whispered about that there was no use for any one so proud; it was easier for the whole town to care for her than for a few neighbors, and Mrs. Robb had better go to the poorhouse before winter and be done with it. At this terrible suggestion her brave heart seemed to stand still. The people whom she cared for most happened to be poor, and she could no longer go into their households to make herself of use. The very elms overhead seemed to say, "Oh, no!" as they groaned in the late autumn winds, and there was something appealing even to the strange passer-by in the look of the little gray house, with Mrs. Robb's pale, worried face at the window.

II

Some one has said that anniversaries are days to make other people happy in, but sometimes when they come they seem to be full of shadows, and the power of giving joy to others, that inalienable right which ought to lighten the saddest heart, the most indifferent sympa-

thy, sometimes even this seems to be withdrawn.

So poor old Mary Ann Robb sat at her window on the afternoon before Thanksgiving and felt herself poor and sorrowful indeed. Across the frozen road she looked eastward over a great stretch of cold meadowland, brown and wind-swept and crossed by icy ditches. It seemed to her as if before this, in all the troubles that she had known and carried, there had always been some hope to hold: as if she had never looked poverty full in the face and seen its cold and pitiless look before. She looked anxiously down the road, with a horrible shrinking and dread at the thought of being asked, out of pity, to join in some Thanksgiving feast, but there was nobody coming with gifts in hand. Once she had been full of love for such days, whether at home or abroad, but something chilled her very heart now.

Her nearest neighbor had been foremost of those who wished her to go to the town farm, and he had said more than once that it was the only sensible thing. But John Mander was waiting impatiently to get her tiny farm into his own hands; he had advanced some money upon it in her extremity, and pretended that there was still a debt, after he cleared her wood lot to pay himself back. He would plough over the graves in the field corner and fell the great elms, and waited now like a spider for his poor

prey. He often reproached her for being too generous to worthless people in the past and coming to be a charge to others now. Oh, if she could only die in her own house and not suffer the pain of homelessness and dependence!

It was just at sunset, and as she looked out hopelessly across the gray fields, there was a sudden gleam of light far away on the low hills beyond; the clouds opened in the west and let the sunshine through. One lovely gleam shot swift as an arrow and brightened a far cold hillside where it fell, and at the same moment a sudden gleam of hope brightened the winter landscape of her heart.

"There was Johnny Harris," said Mary Ann Robb softly. "He was a soldier's son, left an orphan and distressed. Old John Mander scolded, but I couldn't see the poor boy in want. I kept him that year after he got hurt, spite o' what anybody said, an' he helped me what little he could. He said I was the only mother he'd ever had. 'I'm goin' out West, Mother Robb,' says he. 'I sha'n't come back till I get rich,' an' then he'd look at me an' laugh, so pleasant and boyish. He wa'n't one that liked to write. I don't think he was doin' very well when I heard—there, it's most four years ago now. I always thought if he got sick or anything, I should have a good home for him to come to. There's poor

Ezra Blake, the deaf one, too,—he won't have any place to welcome him."

The light faded out of doors, and again Mrs. Robb's troubles stood before her. Yet it was not so dark as it had been in her sad heart. She still sat by the window, hoping now, in spite of herself, instead of fearing; and a curious feeling of nearness and expectancy made her feel not so much light-hearted as light-headed.

"I feel just as if somethin' was goin' to happen," she said. "Poor Johnny Harris! perhaps he's thinkin' o' me, if he's alive."

It was dark now out of doors, and there were tiny clicks against the window. It was beginning to snow, and the great elms creaked in the rising wind overhead.

III

A dead limb of one of the old trees had fallen that autumn, and, poor fire-wood as it might be, it was Mrs. Robb's own, and she had burnt it most thankfully. There was only a small armful left, but at least she could have the luxury of a fire. She had a feeling that it was her last night at home, and with strange recklessness began to fill the stove as she used to do in better days.

"It'll get me good an' warm," she said, still

talking to herself, as lonely people do, "an' I'll go to bed early. It's comin' on to storm."

The snow clicked faster and faster against the window, and she sat alone thinking in the dark.

"There's lot of folks I love," she said once. "They'd be sorry I ain't got nobody to come, an' no supper the night afore Thanksgivin'. I'm dreadful glad they don't know." And she drew a little nearer to the fire, and laid her head back drowsily in the old rocking-chair.

It seemed only a moment before there was a loud knocking, and somebody lifted the latch of the door. The fire shone bright through the front of the stove and made a little light in the room, but Mary Ann Robb waked up frightened and bewildered.

"Who's there?" she called, and she found her crutch and went to the door. She was only conscious of her one great fear. "They've come to take me to the poorhouse!" she said, and burst into tears.

There was a tall man, not John Mander, who seemed to fill the narrow doorway.

"Come, let me in!" he said gaily. "It's a cold night. You didn't expect me, did you, Mother Robb?"

"Dear me, what is it?" she faltered, stepping back as he came in, and dropping her

crutch. "Be I dreamin'? I was a-dreamin' about —Oh, there! What was I a-sayin'? 'T ain't true! No! I've made some kind of a mistake."

Yes, and this was the man who kept the poorhouse, and she would go without complaint; they might have given her notice, but she must not fret.

"Sit down, sir," she said, turning toward him with touching patience. "You'll have to give me a little time. If I'd been notified, I wouldn't have kept you waiting a minute this stormy night."

It was not the keeper of the poorhouse. The man by the door took one step forward and put his arm round her and kissed her.

"What are you talking about?" said John Harris. "You ain't goin' to make me feel like a stranger? I've come all the way from Dakota to spend Thanksgivin'. There's all sorts o' things out here in the wagon, an' a man to help get 'em in. Why, don't cry so, Mother Robb. I thought you'd have a great laugh, if I come and surprised you. Don't you remember I always said I should come?"

It was John Harris, indeed. The poor soul could say nothing. She felt now as if her heart was going to break with joy. He left her in the rocking-chair and came and went in his old boyish way, bringing in the store of gifts and provisions. It was better than any dream. He

laughed and talked, and went out to send away the man to bring a wagonful of wood from John Mander's, and came in himself laden with pieces of the nearest fence to keep the fire going in the meantime. They must cook the beefsteak for supper right away; they must find the pound of tea among all the other bundles; they must get good fires started in both the cold bedrooms. Why, Mother Robb, didn't seem to be ready for company from out West! The great, cheerful fellow hurried about the tiny house, and the little old woman limped after him, forgetting everything but hospitality. Had not she a house for John to come to? Were not her old chairs and tables in their places still? And he remembered everything, and kissed her as they stood before the fire, as if she were a girl.

He had found plenty of hard times, but luck had come at last. He had struck luck, and this was the end of a great year.

"No, I couldn't seem to write letters; no use to complain o' the worst, an' I wanted to tell you the best when I came"; and he told it while she cooked the supper. "No, I wa'n't goin' to write no foolish letters," John repeated. He was afraid he should cry himself when he found out how bad things had been; and they sat down to supper together, just as they used to when he was a homeless orphan boy, whom nobody else wanted in winter weather while he was

crippled and could not work. She could not be kinder now than she was then, but she looked so poor and old! He saw her taste her cup of tea and set it down again with a trembling hand and a look at him. "No, I wanted to come myself," he blustered, wiping his eyes and trying to laugh. "And you're going to have everything you need to make you comfortable long's you live, Mother Robb!"

She looked at him again and nodded, but she did not even try to speak. There was a good hot supper ready, and a happy guest had come; it was the night before Thanksgiving.

JEFF'S THANKSGIVING TURKEY *

Thomas Travis

The boy in the log cabin far up on the mountain-side lifted himself alertly from his bunk, reached for his rifle, and stepped silently as a shadow down the ladder from the loft to the puncheon floor of the cabin. The fire on the big stone hearth was smoldering, just a glimmer of light that threw shadows across the rough log walls, across the little curtained window and the simple furniture of the room—the rough cupboard and table, the hand-made chairs, and the rag carpet on the floor.

He placed his rifle carefully on the table; and as he busied himself getting breakfast, he was talking quietly to himself, whispering almost, "I've got to git him to-day, sure as shootin'!" And from time to time, as he ate, he lifted the rifle, snugged the butt to his cheek, squinted down the sight at the candle-flame, and muttered, "I just natchully got to git him to-day."

From his fearless blue eyes, his fine, clean-

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cut face, rugged already at fourteen with the dawning man-spirit within, there breathed an air of sturdy resolution.

Just at that moment came a rustle and a groan from behind the curtain at the doorway of the only other room in the cabin. Instantly the alert face softened, and lifting the curtain, he bent over the rough bed.

"What is it, Dad? D'ye want anythin'?"

"No, Jeff; jes' you run along now. Mother and me's all right. Only wanted to say 'good luck' to ye."

"Good luck, Dad. I'll git him shore to-day." And picking up his rifle, he blew out the candle, stepped quietly from the cabin, and carefully closed the door behind him.

A stranger, seeing the log cabin lit with its flickering flame, the lazy smoke curling against the starlit sky, the silent boy creeping with rifle in the crook of his arm from the shadows of the doorway long before daylight, might have wondered what was afoot in the mountains that morning.

This was the boy's birthday, and the day before Thanksgiving. His mother lay ill there in the cabin, and his father had been helpless for two weeks with a broken leg. At no time was there plenty in the mountain cabin, and now things had got down almost to basic facts. Corn-pone and bacon were about the only food left,

and Jefferson Roanoke, the boy, was starting after a new supply.

Where he lived, folks had to be good shots—or go hungry. And Jeff, like his father, could bring down a squirrel from any tree. But this day no idea of squirrel or rabbit, nor even fat coon, entered Jeff's head. He was after their Thanksgiving turkey, nothing less, and he had trailed a flock down to the big swamp, miles away.

"They're usin' there right now," he whispered to himself, "an' I've just natchully got to git us a big gobbler. Dad an' Mother ain't a goin' t' eat bacon an' corn-pone on Thanksgivin' an' them sufferin' with a misery. I'm goin' to git me a gobbler," and he petted the rifle fondly.

Ten miles is a long walk before sunrise; but not for a mountain boy. Jeff's long legs just ate up the distance, and the dawn was barely paling the sky when he came in sight of Big Swamp.

Here he went slowly, cautiously, his rifle at ready. For however foolish a barnyard turkey may be, Jeff knew that his wild brother is the wariest bird in all the American woods, the wildest, bar none. So with eager eyes scanning the sand patches and the edges of sink-holes, he searched for the trail. He knew the turkeys were using this part of the big swamp, and soon

his keen eye picked up the tracks, faint, but unmistakable.

Jeff crouched down, careful not to blot them out. He followed like a hound on the trail. The tracks grew plainer. Others joined them, till Jeff was on the warm trail of a big flock.

"At least twenty of 'em!" he said to himself, as he looked carefully to his rifle.

Not the slightest noise of snapping twig did he make. In and out, over logs, through the edge of muddy pools, he followed, noting where a gobbler had scratched, or a hen stopped to pick the low-growing buds.

Deeper and deeper into the big swamp woods the trail led, till at last Jeff felt he was very near the flock. Here the woods were more open and the ground sandy, with little swampy ponds interspersed—good scratching-ground for the turkeys, dotted, too, with cover in the shape of low-growing brier and holly.

Somewhere, within rifle-shot of Jeff, the turkey flock was feeding. One false step, one twig snapping, and the flock, running with the speed of a dog, would fade away in the big swamp without ever showing either a head or a feather. So Jeff decided to lie low and call. He crept to the edge of a thicket. Just in front of him the woods were open for about fifty yards or more, and right opposite was a big tangled windfall of pine and cat-brier, with a huge cypress log,

six feet through, fallen across it. This was his spot—ideal! The turkeys would probably come through the windfall and out in the open space, or they would run along the big log. In either case he could get a clear shot home.

So, he carefully made a blind, twining pine twigs into the low bushes. Then, with rifle cocked and ready, he lay back of a log and reached for his turkey-call—just a bone of the bird, but, in the hands of a master, a luring, interest-provoking call that no flock of turkeys could resist. And Jeff was a master. He could verily talk turkey.

"*Quit—quit, quit—obble, obble—quit.*" So true to life the notes rang that Jeff grinned contentment.

A pause of a minute or more to listen, then again, "*Quit, quit—obble—quit,*" the turkey-call sounded once more.

Faint and far away came an answering, "*Quit, quit.*" Only that. But Jeff's eyes began to shine. "Knew they were here," he muttered; "got 'em talkin' right up."

Again his call rang out, "*Obble, obble, quit, obble, quit, quit.*" It sounded for all the world like a great gobbler, puffing out his challenge with a turkey sneeze of defiance. And this time, right on the end of his call came the answer, surprisingly near—right back of the windfall, in fact.

"Obble, obble, quit—obble, quit, quit."

Jeff crouched now with his rifle snug at his shoulder, the turkey-bone in his cupped hand sounded just one quiet, *"Quit, quit."* Then he waited, tense and alert, his eyes searching the windfall, the big cypress log.

One false move now would spoil all. The turkeys were there, not sixty yards from the muzzle of his rifle, right in the windfall. To Jeff's tense ears came a faint rustle, another, another. Still no turkey came in sight. There came a slight movement in the windfall; then slowly, rising behind the log, the red wattles of a gobbler came into view.

"An' a big one too," thought Jeff, as he brought his rifle to bear. "Just stick yer haid up, turkey, now. That's all I want—just yer haid."

But somehow the turkey failed to respond to Jeff's unspoken invitation. He couldn't get a clear view of the head in those dark shadows of the windfall.

"I'll give him just one more *'quit,'* an' up will pop his haid," thought Jeff, and with cupped hand, he sounded another *"Quit."*

Up came the red wattles, slowly, warily, but gloriously red now against the background, and, waiting for no more, Jeff lined the rifle with sure aim and pulled! *"B'lam!"*

Even as he pulled, right at the crack of his

rifle, a tremendous bellowing "*Boom,*" a huge puff of smoke, and a ghastly blob of red burst above the windfall, followed by a terrific crashing; and out from behind the big cypress log leaped—not a turkey, but a long-legged, gray-haired negro, his eyes wide, his mouth forming a big O, and his arms threshing like windmills, his long legs going with a rush,—over logs, through brambles, across sandy spaces, plump through the swamp-holes,—and twigs, mud, and water flying as he hit them, his shrill yell echoing and reëchoing through the silent woods.

For fully a minute Jefferson Roanoke lay there shaking like a leaf, his face white and haggard, groaning to himself, "Oh, lawdy, lawdy! I done kilt him. Lawdy! Lawdy!"

Then, leaping to his feet, he took after the flying form, whose yells and "tromping" could still be heard.

Jeff was rangily built and a sprinter of no mean ability; also, fear lent wings to his feet. But that negro was certainly no snail, so, as Jeff ran, his brain began to calm down.

"I just natchully couldn't o' kilt him," he muttered soberly. Then again, as he got into his stride: "That feller sure kin run. Seems like his grand-dad must 'a' bin a cross twixt a jack-rabbit an' a deer."

Puffing and struggling, but still going strong, the lad slowly gained till he came in sight of

the negro and yelled, "Ho there, Uncle! Whoa! Back up, man!"

But at the call of the boy, the negro let out an extra kink in his long legs and fairly leaped through the woods. Jeff could hear the cracking, crashing, the shrill yells fainter and fainter, till suddenly they ended in a gurgling "Plop!"

When the boy, breathless, reached the spot, the negro was standing up to his neck in a swamp-hole, the mud and water streaking his gray hair, his hands lifted in appeal and surrender.

"Oh, lawdy, white folks! don' 'e shoot. 'S only me, Uncle Bed, Ebenezer Bedford. Ah ain't done nothin'. Don' 'e shoot again!" Then, seeing it was only a boy following him, he stammered, choked, and said, "Boy, how come ye shoot Uncle Bed? How come?" and he waved his arms and wiped the muddy water from his face.

The two talked and shouted. They explained and re-explained, Uncle Bed still standing, arms a-wave, in the swamp-hole, till at last, crawling forth, he began his side of the tale more coherently.

"Boy, ah jes' thought ah'd git me a tukkey foh Thanksgivin'. Ah bin a-tollin' of 'em tuh dat yere spot fo' de las' week, en mo'. Cum today, ah says, 'Uncle Bed, right yere's wheah you gits you a tukkey.' So ah gits out b'foah

sun-up. Ah bait me de ole cypress log wheah dem tukkeys is usin'. Ah jes fills er up wif cawn, an' den ah sets me down foh tuh call dem tukkeys. An' ah gits 'em talkin' too, *'Quit, quit, obble, obble,'* comin' right along talkin' tukkey. Dey comes straight up to de log en ah waits till ah has a dozen haids right in line. Den ah turns de ole gun loose—'n' *'Blam!'*—right in ma haid, you-all lams Old Uncle Bed wif a rifle gun! How come?''

''Uncle Bed,'' stammered the boy, ''I didn't aim fo' to shoot ye. I thought ye was a turkey. I sees the red head of a big gobbler, and *'Blam!'* I turned loose too. An' ye kim running out like all Nebekannezzer was after ye. Man alive, ye near skeered the life outen me!''

''Red haid of a gobbler nothin'!'' bawled Uncle Bed. ''Dat red haid's ma' bandan' hankuchuf. Ma ole yeahs is col', 'n' ah ain't got nary hat, so ah ties de red bandan' ovah ma yeahs an' knots it on ma haid. Dat's de red-haided gobbler you-all lammed.''

They went back for the guns, left on the ground—and there all became plain. There was Jeff's rifle where he had dropped it. There was Uncle Bed's muzzle-loading shot-gun, empty, the wads still smoking on the sand. Bits of red bandana fluttered from a shattered branch of the windfall, the knots ripped to pieces by Jeff's bullet.

The boy faced the negro soberly. "Well, Uncle Bed," he said ruefully, "I thought I was a-callin' turkeys a sure enough. An' it was you a-answerin' all the time. Don't that beat all tarnation? That's the first time anybody ever fooled me with a turkey-bone."

"Dasso!" solemnly replied Uncle Bed. "Ah was a-callin', 'n' you wus a-answerin'; 'n' ah done think shuah it was de tukkeys."

Then his face changed. His eyes gleamed anew. Lifting his arm he pointed a gnarled finger at Jeff, and said, "White folks, lemme tell you—ah sure seen tukkeys."

"Seen turkeys? where?"

"Right yere, suh, right yere. Ain't ah done line de ole gun on deir haids. Tukkeys was yere, oodles of 'em. Dar! what ah tell yer?" And old Uncle Bed leaped the log nimbly as a boy, stooped, and held up a turkey by the feet. And for the first time, he grinned.

It didn't take Jeff long to see the rest. The ground was dotted with corn. In the trough of a hollow log lay corn by the handful. Rips of slug and shot had spattered the log where Uncle Bed's gun belched out its load. Three other turkeys lay low—big fat ones too. Uncle Bed's shot, coming just the half-second before Jeff's, had gone home true.

"One, two, three, foah! What ah done tol'

you, white folks? Yeah,'' and picking up two big gobblers he handed them to Jeff ''yeah yo is, boy; dem tukkeys b'long to you.''

''Not on your life, Uncle Bed! I ain't aimin' to take your turkeys. I'll git me one for myself. I just natchurlly got to git one. To-morrow's Thanksgivin'.''

''Git one? Wall yere you-all is, two of 'em.'' And as the boy still refused, but with evident weakening, Uncle Bed said: ''Look at yeah; you ain't gittin' no mo'h o' dem tukkeys dis day. Dey ain't wait any longah. Dem tukkeys is plum gone, white folks. Two tukkeys is plenty foh Uncle Bed. An' besides, ain't ah jes natchully got tuh be thankful too? Iffen ah'd stuck my old haid jes one leedle mite further ovah dish yere log, de cullud folks ud be saying ovah me to-morrow, 'Ain't he look natchul?' Yeah yo' is, boy, 'n' maahty thankful dis yeah niggah is jes' tuh be able tuh give 'em. Yeah yo' is. Go 'long.''

That night a proud boy stepped wearily into the cabin on the mountain-side. After carefully lighting two candles and poking the fire till the room was aglow with light, he drew the curtain aside and proudly held up two fat gobblers almost as big as himself.

''There they are, Dad, two of 'em!''

And while the firelight played over the

rugged face of his father, while his mother lifted fond eyes to her boy, Jeff told them all about the bandana and the Thanksgiving turkey.

JANE MURRAY'S THANKSGIVING *

Rebecca Harding Davis

It was late in October and the Woman's Academy of Starboro was waking from its summer's doze, and making ready for the winter's work. The Academy, being a feeder for a great Woman's College, stood, so its prospectus declared, "in the van of the Movement for the Highest Development of Woman."

Even the gardeners, who were taking up the dead leaves on the great lawns which sloped from the pillared porches to the bay, and the scrubbers, flooding the class-rooms, their skirts pinned up and their heads swathed in dusty cheese-cloth, worked as if they knew the tremendous importance of this building to the world's progress.

Miss Clemens, the principal, gave them a stately nod of approval. She knew that they would not work so hard in an ordinary house. "Even these poor shreds of womanhood are driven by the zeitgeist upward—upward!" She

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repeated the word aloud. She always felt that the spirit of a great reformer was on fire within her gaunt, tall body.

She went round the veranda to find the painters, who should have been at work days ago, and observed that the windows of the apartment occupied by the professor of literature were open. She stopped, catching her breath with a look of annoyance.

"Has Professor Murray arrived?" she asked a passing scrubber.

"If you mean Mrs. Jenny Murray, she come here days ago. She's gettin' her rooms ready for school. They'll be as nate as two pins by to-night."

The principal walked on, uncertainly, forgetting the delinquent painters. Of course, the Irish woman would take part with Mrs. Murray! That woman always had a singular attraction for the lower classes. All the servants treated her as if she were the head of the school! She sat down on a bench, digging holes in the sward with her umbrella. She had meant to write to Professor Murray that night a letter conveying certain unpleasant tidings. But as she was here, she must give her the information at once. The principal was seriously annoyed, not because her message would be as a sentence of death to the older woman,—she had not imagination enough to enter into the pain of any

other human being than herself,—but she knew that she should have given the information months ago.

"I shall be criticized because I did not tell her in the spring!" she said. Trustees, parents, all the other dull folk with whom the world was filled were always criticizing her! The water stood in her pale eyes at the thought of how little she was appreciated.

At that moment Jane Murray put the last book into its shelf, and looked around, smiling, at her little apartment. How homelike and tranquil her old rooms were. The very place, she thought, for a young girl first to hear the truths which the thinkers of the world had brought into it.

For to this little teacher the study of literature was an actual daily companionship with the leaders of human thought. Her girls had plodded with Cicero to his farm, and loitered through the muddy lanes of Stratford with Shakespeare; they had been barred with Savonarola into the cell at St. Mark's, and hated as fiercely as he did the mob outside; they had strolled on the Strand with Lamb and Dickens and Thackeray, and loved with them its old shops and homes and ways.

When Jane Murray's husband and baby died, leaving her alone in the world, she had slowly taken these great living folk in books into her

life, making them her friends and companions. Then she made them the friends and companions of her scholars. She had begun with a class which soon grew into a school. An idea went abroad that she gave to her pupils a hungry desire to learn. Besides, she had a curious charm of manner and speech, and anxious parents sent their daughters to her—as Northern girls now are sent to certain schools in Virginia and Maryland—that they might be trained, not so much into scholars as gentlewomen.

When the founders of the present academy wished to establish it at Starboro, they found this prosperous, old-fashioned school already there, and proposed to Mrs. Murray that they should take it, enlarge and re-christen it (though in fact Jane's school had no name), giving her charge of the department of literature. She was greatly flattered and pleased, and promptly accepted the offer. Some of her friends whispered that the good-will of the school should have been bought for a certain sum in cash. But Jane Murray seldom considered sums in cash. She hardly noticed that her salary was small. It was all that she needed for her board and clothes. For nine years now she had been busy bringing raw, well-meaning farmers' daughters into the presence of the great thinkers and seers of all ages, giving to the dullest

girl a belief that she, too, could gain some help from them in her long journey.

When Mrs. Murray came up to her window and saw Miss Clemens's lean figure approaching, she shrugged her shoulders, and drew back. Secretly she considered the principal a bore, and seldom wasted time with her. The next moment a strange figure on horseback came through the gate, and Jane drew still farther out of sight. That was Maria Price. How big and loud she had been, even as a girl, when she took the course in literature, and called Scott a vaporing old humbug, and threw Dante down, declaring that American girls would do better to study the ins and outs of a Presidential election rather than the hell and heaven of a crazy Italian. She had gone into all sorts of public work, now that she had come into her money. She wore a coat and trousers of khaki, and sat on the horse like a man. Jane, when she saw that, shivered and turned her back.

Maria, at that moment, alighted and was talking to Miss Clemens. She was a trustee of the academy, and one of its largest stockholders.

"School opens next week, and you have not yet told her she is to go!" she exclaimed.

Miss Clemens lost color. "That is all right! I will attend to that duty in season. I have provided her successor."

"Successor? I should say so! The girls must

have no more of such fancy training; they must go through the regular textbooks to make ready for the college exams. I tried them last spring on a page of dates—births and deaths of English writers—and they all flunked by a dozen years. On which Mrs. Murray remarked: 'It is not as important that the girls should know when these men lived as why they lived.' But what about her salary? What provision has she?''

''Oh, no doubt she has saved plenty of money. What expenses had she? A widow with not a human being of her kin.''

''What's that? No kin? She's not young, either. Nigh to seventy, I should say.'' Maria struck her yellow trousers with her whip. ''Well, you can tell her she's got to go. I'm off. I don't like the job,'' she said, jumping into the saddle.

Even Miss Clemens felt an uneasy qualm of pity as she sat in Mrs. Murray's pretty room ready for her task. What if the woman had not saved any money? Why were these unpleasant jobs in life always laid on her?

She bowed and smiled, however, as she delivered her message, and was pleased at her own fluency. But Mrs. Murray was unusually dull. She rose uncertainly, staring at the other woman.

''I don't understand. I am to give up my school?'' she said.

"Oh, really! Your school! We may as well face facts, my dear madam. You are only a teacher here. The trustees consider that another system of instruction would be better for the school—questions and answers learned by rote from textbooks. In fact, we have secured the services of Professor Johns in your place. He is himself, as you know, a well-known author."

"No, I never wrote anything," said Jane, with a dreary laugh. Her eyes wandered over the class-room, the cases of old books, the dainty little chamber with its easy chair and wood fire on the hearth.

"You mean—that I am to go away from here?"

"Of course. This wing is the department of literature, and Professor Johns—" Miss Clemens rose with an air of finality. "Be assured, madam, you will carry with you the best wishes of the trustees and faculty. I hope you have made provision for a comfortable old age?" she added, with a curious glitter in her light eyes.

But Jane had come to herself now. It never had been her habit to make comrades of strangers.

"I have no reason to dread the future," she said, smiling. There always was something in the little woman's carriage of her head, with its rolls of white hair, and the gleam in her dark

blue eyes which made Miss Clemens feel dull and awkward.

"I am glad you are provided for," she said; "you could not expect to find any position elsewhere. The modern custom of discharging all employees at seventy obtains with women as with men; no chance for them. Too bad, but so it is!" Then she bowed herself out with a smile.

Jane shut the door and went back into the room, stooping to pick up a roll of paper which she had dropped. It was her lecture to beginners on folklore, that first groping of the human mind for enduring expression. She opened it, and then suddenly let it fall.

"Why, I shall not use it!" she cried. "I never shall use it again! I am not to teach anybody any more! Not my girls! What does it mean? I am nothing—nothing in the world!"

She sat for a long time, her hands over her eyes. An hour ago she had power over many human lives. She thought she had a great work to do. Now her hands were empty. She was thrown out useless into the highway, and her work was given to a cheap, tawdry pretender.

She turned, shivering, to stir the fire, and then stopped.

"I have no right here! Professor Johns— I have no home," she said, with a queer laugh. "I told her I had no reason to dread the future.

I had some dull notion that God would take care of me."

Some sudden thought made her turn to her desk and take out her pocketbook.

"Ten dollars and a half," she said, staring out into the gathering twilight, "and that is all, every cent I have! There is no more coming anywhere. That is all I've brought out of my work of seventy years!"

Just then she saw Miss Clemens driving out of the gate in her new victoria, the coachman in livery.

"I've done better work than she in the world," she muttered.

And then Jane Murray, as most of us have done some time in life, when we were worsted or tortured, called God to account. Had this dumb, unseen Force that put her here no sense of pity or justice? If men were cruel, why did He not interfere? Was He blind or deaf?

She cried out to the gray darkness overhead:

"I have worked hard for all these years, and my hands are empty! Is that right? Is that just?"

But there was no answer.

Jane's ten dollars took her to Plowden. Plowden was the old Murray farm on the Shenandoah. They had sold it all but two acres of stony land and the old farm-house, which was a

wreck. Jane had owned it, but eight years ago, when her Cousin Polly Vance's husband had a stroke, Jane had put them into it. It had at least a roof to cover them. Her salary went down to Plowden regularly until Jim Vance died, and Polly sent it back, declaring she "could fend for herself." A year later, she bought the old place from Jane.

Now, in her extremity, Mrs. Murray remembered the old shanty and Polly's kind face, and betook herself to them. Two days had passed since she left the school. They seemed like a waste of years. One reason for this was that whenever she knelt, from habit, at night, she quickly scrambled to her feet again.

"I have nothing to say to Him!" she would say. "He has forgotten me."

When she reached the little station, there was Polly with a stout mare and a buckboard, her face red and beaming. She eyed Jane's boxes of books.

"Don't tell me you've given up the school and have come here to stay! I can't believe there is such luck ahead for me!" she gasped. "And me just going to advertise, to scour the country for a partner!"

"I have no money for any business," said Jane, and tried to tell her story.

"It's not money I want," interrupted Polly. "It's brains, and a woman who will take an

interest. To get Jane Murray! Heavens! What luck! What a Thanksgiving we will have next week!"

"I—keep Thanksgiving?" muttered Jane.

Polly's keen, gray eyes flashed on her, and then she flicked the old mare.

"Get on, Coley! Well, I say, what luck!" she muttered again.

The road wound through the hills, gorgeous in their fall robes of crimson and gold; below was the Shenandoah roaring over its rocky bed—always the most picturesque of American rivers.

"There's your farm!" said Polly, as they came through a gap. The old farm-house, solid and comfortable, stood on a hill surrounded by orchards, gardens, and clusters of bee-hives. It's windows shone with welcome.

"What does this mean?" said Jane. "How have you done it?"

"Bees and chickens, child. Nothing else. I began with one hive and a single clutch of eggs. But they were the best! My trade is very good. But the farm and house are yours, Jane. I have only borrowed them from you. You gave us a roof to cover us when we were starving. You gave him a home to die in. Now—"

She choked, and neither woman spoke until they alighted at the porch.

She led Jane into the very room to which

she had come as a bride. There was the same old furniture, the fire burning on the hearth, and on the walls the photographs of the "Ecce Homo" and Tintoretto's "Descent from the Cross," which Miss Clemens had refused to allow Jane to take from the walls of her room. Had Polly, then, known all about it? Had she met and worsted Miss Clemens? Had she made ready this home for life for her?

In a few days Jane had settled down to work at Polly's books. They were in dire confusion. She could earn her living here fairly, she told herself. She did not want to be a beggar. When the day's work was done the two old women, who had been young together, had a thousand things to talk over as they sipped their tea. Jane was startled to find that these gossips were more interesting to her now than were even Dante or Lamb.

About a mile from the farm-house there was a group of cottages, called a "rest-home," owned by a charitable organization in the city. They were filled with tired women, worn-out shop-girls, starving seamstresses, etc. One day Jane received a letter from Maria Price, who was president of the board of managers, asking her to visit the home three times a week, to read to the inmates, or talk to them, to give them some knowledge of books and of the help

and comfort to be gained from them. A liberal salary was to be given for the work.

Jane went at once to the home, and met Maria, who received her with marked deference. Jane was only coldly civil, though the other woman wore skirts now, and not yellow trousers.

"You will take the work?" she said. "I thought it would attract you. The minds of these women need new, stirring ideas of life as much as their starving bodies need bread. Nobody can give it to them so well as you."

"Yes," said Jane, "I will take it. But no salary. It is enough for me to have my own work in the world again to do."

Maria was silent a moment.

"As you choose. Whatever will make you happiest while you live."

Jane suddenly rose and came up to her.

"Why did you give me this thing?" she said. "You took my work away from me—"

Maria, too, rose.

"Yes, there's no time to train the modern young woman by your dawdling methods, Mrs. Murray. But you—I want your old age to be warm and full. Do you remember when I was an ugly, coarse child, years ago, one day I fought with some boys and was thrown into the mud and hurt, how you took me to your room, and

bathed and put me in your own bed? You forget? I don't, then. Good-by. We needn't talk things over. We understand it is all right between us."

In a day or two letters began to come to Jane, letters from all sorts and conditions of women —the scholars whom she had taught and helped by little and great kindnesses. They had heard of her dismissal, and they sent gifts to her—sometimes, even, money, but always the tenderest love and sympathy. She sent the money back. But the love and tenderness stayed with her and slowly made the days warmer and the world brighter. Never had the woods worn such gorgeous splendor. Never was a home so cozy and pleasant as this, or a comrade so considerate as Polly.

On Thanksgiving morning a light flutter of snow fell on the woods and carpet of red leaves below. Jane stood at her window, looking into the bright, silent heaven beyond.

Always silent. He was dumb, no matter how cruel life was down here; no matter how we cried to Him, He did not answer.

But as she stood there, warmed by the splendor of the day without and by the fire and homely comforts of the room within, a thought suddenly stirred her heart.

Had He not answered?

There had been a wrench and agony which

drove her to Him. She had been forced to see how near she was to the end. She had been forced to consider the few steps that were between her and the end.

But she had been left her own work to do until it came. Had He done this? Was it He who had sent her from every side love and tenderness because of the poor little kindnesses which she had been able to show in the years which were gone?

Not money, not power, but a great content now filled her life.

On that Thanksgiving Day, the soul of the poor little woman abased itself as it never had done before. For she knew that she had spoken to Him and He had answered.

THANKSGIVING ON HERRING HILL *

Julia M. Tenney

"Good-by, Aunt Susan. Take good care of yourself and the house, and we will be home again on Saturday"—and Mrs. Van Arsdale drew her head in at the carriage window, the coachman settled his robes about him, and the family was off to take Thanksgiving dinner at the old homestead ten miles away.

Aunt Susan stood watching the departing vehicle till a corner of the street hid it from view; then, turning quickly to the other servants who had assembled to bid the family good-by, she began giving her orders in a tone of such briskness as would certainly have surprised the absent mistress of the house, always accustomed to the meekest, softest speeches from this mountain of colored flesh who reigned over her kitchen.

"Here, you Jane! Don' you be er-standin' dar gappin' down de street all day, as 'o you spec' all dis here wuk gwine do hisse'f! Don' you know dis's Thanksgibin' Day, an' dar'll be

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fifty ob de ladies an' gemmun ob our 'quantance here to-night for to 'joy de supper we'uns got to 'vide? You go kill fo' ob dem good-sized hens —de big speckle' ones what roosts low, whar de rats mought er reached 'em if we's axed about 'em. Now min' you don' make no mistake an' git massa's young chickens, ca'se I's lef' in charge ob dis here place, and I ain' gwine 'low de t'ings what de fambly prize to be 'sturbed—not if I knows it. Here, Patrick Henry, you and George Washington come kerry ebry blessed bit of de furniture, 'cep'n' jes' de table an' cheers, outen dis here dinin'-room, an' set it in de parlor, an' I'll lock de do', so dey'll be all safe an' soun'. Polly, you come he'p me beat up er couple ob cakes an' some doughnuts —I spec' what wid de chickens dey'll be our full share, er-countin' de wuk an' 'sponsibility— which ain' no light matter.''

In a few minutes the whole place was astir, for these trusty servants had determined to make a grand success of this Thanksgiving supper, to be held in their absent master's beautiful large dining-room.

''Yer see, Polly,'' continued Aunt Susan, in a sanctimonious tone, as she and Polly helped themselves liberally to the ingredients for their cakes—''yer see how all t'ings wuk togedder fur good, jes' as Elder Jones say las' Sunday night. Dis time las' week prospec's

look moughty black fur dis here supper, but now de good Lord's done 'ranged ebryting jes' right; de whole fambly done gone away, an' dey done took dat meddlin', tattlin' ole Mammy wid 'em, an' my key jes' fit de sto'-room lock, an' de sunshine ob prosperity is above us!" and Aunt Susan wound up with a flourish of the cake-spoon and a tone that an orator might have envied.

"Yes'm, dat's so; you cert'nly is a pow'ful argyfier, Maw!" said Polly with admiration.

"Oh, we's all got our share ob talons, as Mis' Van Arsdale call it, an' I's conshus I ain' bin lef' out entirely," replied the modest "argy-fier."

"Well if here ain' Lindy Jackson!" she exclaimed in a moment. "How in de land's name did she git here dis time er day! Mis' Smith's dat stric' wid her gals dat dey don' giner'ly git out till decent folks is in bed. How's yer, Miss Lindy? Walk in an' draw a cheer an' take a seat. Won' yer res' yer shawl?"—as a tall, dowdy mulatto girl with a shawl flung over her head and a suspicious-looking protuberance under one corner of it made her appearance at the kitchen door.

"I's fairly well, Mis' Washington. How yer fin' yerse'f? Howdy, Polly. I ain' got er minit ter stay! I jes' run down wid dis here pie (it's mincemeat an' fus' rate) while Mis' Smith's

downtown er-buyin' ob her nuts an' raisins. If I kin manage ter git anything else, I'll fotch it wid me when I come ter-night."

"S'pose Mis' Smith miss dis here?" asked Aunt Susan, as she turned the pie around, looking at it with the eye of a connoisseur.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the playful Lindy, "I's got all dat fixed. Dar was a 'spicious lookin' tramp at de kitchen do' dis mo'nin' while de pies wus er-settin' on de table; dat's all I want to clar me. 'Liza sent word you could trus' her to bring er bunch ob celery when she come ter-night. Good-by, I mus' be off now an' chase myse'f home 'fore Mis' Smith gits back"—and Miss Jackson disappeared as rapidly as she had come.

"Dat gal's moughty cute, an' gifted wid what Miss Flora call 'tacks' in gitten outen scrapes!" said Aunt Susan, admiringly, as she handed Polly the pie to put in a safe place till the hour of need.

"Dat's so! dat's so!" replied Polly, who rarely varied her replies unless astonishment forced an emphatic "I vow!" from her lips.

Jane now returned with the four dead chickens, which she began to pick and clean at the sink, while she sang in a high, loud, soprano voice:

" 'I n-e-e-d Thee every h-o-u-r.' "

Patrick Henry and George Washington (the

former, butler, the latter, stable-boy in the Van Arsdale establishment) reported the furniture moved, and were sent by Aunt Susan on a collecting tour to the various houses where the expected guests were employed, with very minute directions that George Washington, who was "a pow'ful blund'rer," was not to "go in any ob de kitchens, but jes' wait outside, out ob sight ob de winders, wid de bigges' market-basket and de gallon milk-bucket," while Patrick Henry went in to urge the ladies to be generous.

The first house they visited was Dr. Cooke's, and Mrs. Sarah Primus, who attended to the culinary department, was watching with a quart of beautiful large oysters—whose absence would not be noticed when the cold-water spigot had done its duty.

She just had time to whisper, "I'll bring some cold turkey and a pan of milk jes' as soon as dinner is over here," when the door opened and the lady of the house entered hurriedly, saying, "Sarah, is that the oyster man going out with the tin pail?"

"Y-y-yes'm," stammered Sarah, with lucky truthfulness.

"Well, stop him quick and tell him to bring me an extra quart of selected oysters; there are more guests coming than I expected when I gave my order."

Sarah sped through the hall, her thoughts keeping time with her feet. "Here, you man! Oyster man," she screamed, "Mis' Cooke say bring her ernother quart ob oysters." Then, seeing the puzzled look on her friend's face, she added, with a knowing wink, "You come from Cod's, didn't yer? Well, tell him we wants big ones for fries."

And with a sense of relief that made her feel as light as air she shut the door, and in a moment more was back in the kitchen, the "good-natured, honest soul" whom her mistress relied upon.

Lieutenant Paul's was the next kitchen visited, and here Mrs. Mahala Reed reigned supreme and "nothing was kept under lock and key." Mrs. Mahala consequently was a very generous contributor, and, the family being at church, Mr. Jackson was taken in to look at the parlors and dining-room and try the new piano in the music-room, while Mrs. Reed called George Washington in and placed in his basket numerous packages of sugar, tea, coffee, etc., etc., surpassing herself by adding not only a beautiful large mold of jelly, a small pound-cake,—"jes' de scrapin's ob de pan, yer know," —but two bottles of the lieutenant's best sherry, one of which George Washington and Patrick Henry Jackson shared in the next alley, filling the empty bottle with the best of hydrant

water at the corner. So cheered were they by generosity and wine that their fascinations won large donations from the next three or four houses.

But prosperity was not to continue unabated, and these honorable gentlemen were to meet with a most unkind rebuff at Major Peters's, whose door they would certainly have passed had not the fumes of the wine and the chat by the fire of the next-door house rather confused them. For here Aunt Hannah Norris lived as cook, and her husband Adam had been butler for twenty years, and their strict honesty and unfearing truthfulness made them a perpetual terror to the evil-doers of "Herrin' Hill." More than one "misfortunate young pusson" had met with open and pointed rebuke in the face of the assembled congregation of Ebenezer Church at the "weekly experience and conference meetings," where Uncle Adam's tall, portly figure was a familiar and awe-inspiring sight, while the numerous badges which adorned Aunt Hannah's spacious bosom on funeral occasions showed her to belong to many honorable societies, such as "The Rising Sons and Daughters of Moses and Aaron," "The Ancient Daughters of Tabitha," "The Burying Society of the Good Samaritan," "The Galilean Fisherman," and others too numerous to mention; so it is easy to be seen that it was an un-

precedented act of recklessness on the part of these two collectors to venture in here on such an errand.

Aunt Hannah turned from the oven where she had been basting her turkey, the loud knock at the door startling her so that the corners of her bandana handkerchief literally stood up over her head and her glasses nearly dropped to the floor. She soon recovered her dignity, however, and closing the oven, she quietly opened the kitchen door and stood facing the young men with questioning disapproval.

"Good-mornin', Aunt Hannah," said Patrick Henry, with assumed nonchalance. George Washington cowered before the stately figure in the doorway, and would quickly have "made hisse'f sca'ce" if Patrick Henry had not bolstered up his own courage by laying a detaining hand upon his arm and saying, "Here's George Washington, Mis' Norris, what's er—collectin' a few donations from dem as likes to give to de poo' ob de town, and he's called, knowin' you and Mr. Norris always heads de charities in our church, an' would like to do sumpen here," and he paused, out of breath with his own eloquence.

Aunt Hannah surveyed the collectors over her brass-rimmed spectacles, then motioning with her hand she said with some suspicion, "Come in, young men, an' 'splain dis here busi-

ness a leetle clearer. What poo' ob de town is you er-collectin' fur? If dey's de Lord's poo', den Hannah Norris ain't de one ter hol' back, but de Lord ain't often beholden to sech as you-uns ter do His collectin' fur Him, an' I's always been s'picious ob you, Patrick Henry Jackson, eber sence Lawyer Jones's black mare wur deskivered foundered in de stable de same night ob de day dat you made sech a fine show ob yerse'f on a black horse as marshal in dat percession down at Lowtown."

"Lor, Aunt Hannah! Ain' you neber gwine ter forgit dat coincidunce? Dat's all it wur—jes' a coincidunce."

"I don' know nuthin' 'bout what kin' er 'dunce it wur, but I ain' sech a dunce myse'f as I can't see fru a wall wid er hole in it. Now be spry an' jes' tell me what you an' George Washington is arter, 'ca'se I got plenty ter do 'thout fillin' up my time with un-useful chatter."

The account of their charitable undertaking which these two city missionaries gave was evidently very unsatisfactory to Aunt Hannah, and her suspicions momentarily increased as the replies to her searching questions grew more embarrassed and contradictory. Finally uncertainty was turned to certainty in her mind, and in her righteous indignation she rose, the corners of her turban standing up like avenging

horns and the white kerchief crossed over the bosom of her purple calico dress rising and falling with her contending emotions.

"Yer mis'able pair er young thieves!" she cried. "What yer mean er-comin' roun' to hones' people's homes er-temptin' dem to de debil's tricks? Geder up yer traps an' clear outen dis here kitchen, an' lemme open de do's an' winders fur de pure breff of heaben ter purify dis air 'fore I breave 'tamination!"

"I's no thief!" thundered Patrick Henry. "I ain' neber stole nothin' in my life, an' I won' 'low no man nor woman nuther to insult me!"

"Yer ain' no thief!" cried Aunt Hannah, not in the least frightened by the half-drunken swagger of her opponent. "Yer ain' no thief, ain' yer? What was yer dat night at de parlor social at Broder Barber's house, when yer strut 'roun' de flo' in Mars Jim Van Arsdale's swaller-tail coat? Yer warn' no thief dat Sunday las' summer when de fambly war out ob town an' trus' you wid de stables, an' you take de madam's own kerridge and bays an' rides dem simp'rin' Bundy girls all 'roun' fru de Park! Ye warn' no thief when Mars Van Arsdale buy yer time, an' pay yer hones' fur it, an' leabe yer to keer fur de garden an' house while he at de ocean, an' you spen' er week at er time 'thout eber settin' foot nigh de place! Oh, yer ain' no thief, ain' yer? Well, yer don' look like

sech a pow'ful hones' man, not by de lights I been taught ter lib by''—and Aunt Hannah paused for want of breath.

''I don' keer!'' muttered Patrick Henry, sulkily, as he edged toward the door, closely followed by the terrified George Washington. ''I neber kep' nobody's t'ings. I returned all dem little t'ings dat I borrowed.''

''Yer returned 'em all, did yer? Did yer return de wear an' tear yer got outen dat coat, an' de skin an' paint what yer rubbed offen dat team when yer upsot down der bank, an' de flowers what died 'ca'se yer didn' water 'em in dat garding, an' de time what yer stole from dat marster what trus'ed yer? Adam, I'se glad yer come in here—'' as her gray-haired, dignified partner appeared in the doorway, drawn by the sounds of angry voices—''I'se glad yer come, fur dese young liars is insults to de air what hones' people breave!''—and she held the outside door open, and, looking at the ''insults,'' pointed majestically to the kitchen porch.

They stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once, while Aunt Hannah seethed and bubbled in wrathful denunciations to Adam, who fully sympathized with his wife, and promised that as soon as the noonday dinner was over he would use his half-holiday in seeing Brother Jones and undertaking that (to

many human beings) pleasurable task of confessing his brother's faults.

Meantime, the crestfallen and now tolerably sobered young men went on their way, but in a decidedly spiritless manner; indeed so great was the change in Mr. Jackson, known to the Parlour Social Club of the Ancient Dorcas as the "lady-killer," that several of the belles of Herring Hill, after receiving gloomy calls, to which they responded to the best of their mistresses' ability, ran out to the alley gates adjoining their respective homes and then and there forswore for the future all captivating efforts in his direction.

At length the bucket was about filled with thank-offerings of oysters, while the piled market-basket caused serious embarrassment and some narrow escapes in its transit to the Van Arsdale home, for the people were now coming home from the churches, and one or two had turned and glanced wonderingly at the well-known and much-desired Van Arsdale butler. Had the corporation doctor attended to his calling upon a commission basis, his eyes would have lingered with less criticism and much real joy upon the heterogeneous collection in that basket, which promised him such a busy future. Caution had its reward, however, and the bucket and basket, with their human attendants, reached their destination in safety.

Aunt Susan met the young men with exclamations of delight. For her resources were not limited even to the bountiful supplies which they brought; during their absence not a few great generous souls had found the hour of worship a favorable one in which to exercise that virtue from which it should never be divorced, the twice-blessed one of giving, and already the long table had taken on quite a festive appearance and the key of the dining-room door was deemed safest in Aunt Susan's pocket.

But even in the midst of the elation attendant upon the evidently approaching success, Aunt Susan could not help observing the uneasy George Washington and crestfallen Patrick Henry.

"What's der matter wid you-uns anyway?" she burst out at length. "Yer goin' 'roun' like er dog wid his tail atween his legs! Is yer got in any scrapes in dis here business?"

Then they told her of their late experience, not considering it worth while to detain her on this busy day by relating that the contents of one of the sherry bottles was at the root of the whole trouble. Aunt Susan for one moment looked thoroughly scared, and throwing her short fat arms into the air exclaimed: "Lor sakes! now yer done it! I wouldn't be s'prised if dat o'nery old critter of a Hannah Norris

had de whole p'lice force down here on de fron' porch by sundown!" Then, seeing the terrifying effect of her words upon her audience, she continued in a different tone: "Well, well! 'tain' no use cryin' ober spilt milk! I spec' we's a match fur dat woolly-headed old meddler, so don' git down 'n de mouf. De 'Lord he'ps dem what he'ps 'emse'ves,' dat's whad de Book say, an' we cert'nly is been er-he'pin er'-se'ves dis day!"

Aunt Susan always felt better after quoting Scripture, so now with restored cheerfulness she slapped Patrick Henry on the back, patted George Washington's stupid head, and, beginning to unpack the basket, said, "You'se done bery well indeed dis mornin', boys, so perk up, an' ack cheerful!"

"Can't ack cheerful when yer feelin's is 'sulted an' stomped on like mine has been!" said the sensitive and bruised Mr. Jackson sulkily.

"Oh, feelin's! Bother take yer feelin's, I say! Ack cheerful an' de feelin's 'll git dar from de actin'!" replied Aunt Susan, unconscious of how high a place she showed herself worthy of taking in the class of the worldly wise.

Truly "All the world's a stage," and "Act! act!" is the cry of all classes.

To pursue the figure a step further, let us

follow the ladies of our party into the "green-room," as a few hours later they resorted thither to make their evening toilets.

It was the large front chamber usually occupied by the lady of the house, but to-night to be used as a cloak-room. The blinds had been carefully closed and the shades drawn down—could it be for the purpose of keeping out the cold air? The gas burned brightly and the light fell full upon Mrs. Susan Washington, as she stood in front of the long glass, holding her breath till her eyes literally bulged from the sockets, while Jane (who as upper chambermaid was a good deal about the dressing-rooms, so was supposed to be an authority upon toilets) strained till the belt of Mrs. Van Arsdale's second-best black silk (unfortunately she had worn the best one herself) gave a warning crack, in her efforts to make it meet around Aunt Susan's forty-two-inch waist.

" 'Tain' no use, Mis' Washington, 'twon' meet, not by six inches; but I kin jes' pin it on each side, an' dar's a han'some pink sash in Miss Flora's bureau what I kin pin ober de gap. It's er long train, so it won' hitch up much in de back nohow."

"Yes," said the suffering victim of the prolonged squeeze, "but what 'n de land's name'll I do 'bout de wais'?"

Jane looked blank for a moment, but her

brow cleared directly and she stepped to the wardrobe and produced a lavender silk breakfast-sacque, with a cascade of soft creamy lace falling its full length from the throat, and helped the short arms of Aunt Susan into the sleeves.

"Lor, Maw, yer do look gran'! Now if you jes' would lemme put some dis here powder on yer hair (coaxingly) yer'd take de shine clean offen Mis' Van Arsdale herse'f!" and Polly brought her own powdered, kinky locks forward to strengthen her appeal.

" 'Tain' no use in yer talkin' dat foolishness ter me; yer know well 'nough I hates 'pocrisy anyway yer puts it, an' I ain' gwine ter pile flour ner nothin' else onto my hair fur to make b'lieve it's er stylish gray! I'd think yer'd be skeered yer'd wake up 'n de mo'nin' an' fin' ebry blessed stran' in yer head white as de driben snow, as a jedgment agin' yer fur tryin' to 'struct de Almighty in his wuk!"

"Lor, Maw, how yer does talk!" giggled Polly. "But come he'p me git inter dis here worritin' frock; I'm plagued if 'tain' too short anyhow. You jes' take some pins an' pin it down"—as Aunt Susan came forward and began to adjust Miss Flora's garnet cashmere upon the gaunt form of her eldest hopeful. "Not too fur down now—you know it's got ter connec' wid de basque," continued Polly. Jane in

the meantime had donned a soft blue tea-gown of Miss Flora's, and could be heard in the adjoining room handling such articles of jewelry as had been left upon that young lady's dressing-table.

Aunt Susan stepped hastily to the door just in time to see Miss Jane slip a very jingly set of bangles onto her sizable wrists and stick a silver comb very upright into the front of her marvelously gotten up hair.

"You Jane!" she thundered, "you o'nery critter! You jes' lef' 'lone dose jewelries! Ain' yer got no conshuns? I'se lef' in charge ob dis here place, an' I feel worvy ob de trus', an' I ain' de one to see de fambly plate an' jewelries so much as teched by any one here present! Yo' take dat comb right outen yer head, an' dem spanglers offen' yer black wris's, an' don' yer lay de weight ob yer han' on nothin' in dis house 'thout 'axen me fus!" and with a proud air of conscious virtue she glowered upon the offending Jane. The comb came down from its lofty perch and was put back upon the table, but the bangles were smuggled into the pocket of the blue tea-gown, to be replaced upon the insulted wrists at a later hour.

The ladies being now dressed, and Aunt Susan having added the key of Miss Flora's room to the already large bunch which weighed down her pocket and gave her a feeling of being

the very worthy custodian of the family possessions, they descended to the large hall which ran the full length of the house and had been settled upon as the best place in which to receive the guests.

Here they were met by Patrick Henry and George Washington, who (save the stiff, high collar which each wore, and Mr. Harry Van Arsdale's patent leather pumps, which George's necessities drove him to borrow) wore their own best "Sunday suits."

They were quite inspired with awe by the vision of beauty which burst upon them as the three ladies entered the hall.

"Now, Mawmer," said Polly, who being parlor-maid had witnessed her mistress's receptions, so now acted as sort of floor-manager to the masquerading quintet, "yo' stan' near de do' an' hol' yer han's so—wid yer hank'chief atween 'em. Lor, Maw! yer arms 's so short an' yerse'f so big dat yer han's won' connec' no nearer n' der belt o' yer dress do—te-he-he-he! Jane, yo' stan' aside her an' laugh like Miss Flora do, no matter what de folks says. Patrick Henry an' I'll be at de dinin'-room do' to show 'em in."

"No yer won' nuther," burst forth from Aunt Susan, who at this point recovered her self-possession. "Yer bofe on yer stan' here aside me 'n Jane, an' I'll unlock dat dinin'-

room do' myse'f at de right time! George Washington, yo stan' at de front do', an' hint to de fr'en's dat de nex'-do' folks is putty tattlin', so de'll come in more quiet like. Lan' sakes! dar's de bell now! It skeered me! Draw dat screen 'cross in fron' de do', so's all de worl' can't look in at us, an' don' yer open dat do' but jes' wide 'nough fur to let 'em in widout squeezin' 'em."

Mr. Latiny Lazarus and Miss Lavinia Speed were the first comers, and they received a warm welcome. While the lady was laying aside her wraps, Mr. Lazarus stood gazing about him in a kind of awe that finally found vent in the remark:

"Dis here house's mighty 'ceivin'. It looks sizable 'nough from de outside, but when yer gits in it de walls stretch a-w-a-y from yer, an' de ceilin's r-i-s-e above yer, till yer feel like er ant in er quart cup! It cert'nly air 'ceivin'!"

"Yes," giggled Jane, "dat's what yer fin's when yer hires here fur to sweep it!"

Miss Araminta Phoenix and Mr. Hiram Spinner came next.

"Walk right in! How's yer sister, Mis' Culber, Miss Araminta?" said Aunt Susan.

"She's poorly, thank God, Mis' Washington. What wid de wuk an' her drunk ole man an' all dem chilen, she's 'bout played out!"

"Has she got nice close fur dat new baby?"

"No, she ain' got none 't all, an' she say she ain' gwine ter git none nuther. She's done 'vided close fur nine chilen already an' she say she's sure dat's her share, so she's trus'in to de Lord to snatch dis one."

The bell interrupted them here, and quite a batch of guests arrived together. There was Miss Ardella Dangerfield with Mr. Lewis Weaver, Miss Jemima Lee and Mr. Silas Smackum, Miss Lucinda Cornish and Mr. Primas Tilghman, and many others, and then came the mammoth form—did I say form?—no; there was none there—the mammoth proportions of Mrs. Georgiana Waters, whom the "Bundy girls" had wickedly nicknamed the "Virginia creeper" because of the land of her birth and the slowness of her motions.

Charles Wormley, Daniel Edward Pugsley, and Jerry Douglas came together, and were declared by all to be "de grandes' lookin' gemmun in de room!" Polly turned up her flat little nose at the attentions of Daniel Edward, who was a "real gemmun's valit," preferring a certain stable-boy, Simon Green by name; but Aunt Susan informed her in a severe aside that she "mought take a fine-tooth comb an' scrape de town from ind to ind, an' not fin' a better-to-do, quality-like young pusson dan Daniel Edward," so she dared not offend him.

The guests had all arrived excepting Elder

Jones, whose advent they anxiously awaited before throwing open the dining-room doors, when the party was startled by a very decided and persistent knocking at the kitchen door. Who could it be? A sudden guilty terror fell upon the good people, and "silence like a poultice came to heal the blows of sound." For a few moments no one could summon courage to go and investigate the source of the knocking, which was repeated and grew louder; for "conscience oft makes cowards of us all," and there may have been a modicum of that article left in this festive throng. With widely distended eyes and chattering teeth, Patrick Henry pronounced the magic word "Cops!" and Aunt Susan suddenly found the wrong side of the screen interesting. Mr. Tilghman noticed the gas was too high and lowered it, while George Washington decided that the air within was close and stepped out on the porch .

Mr. Latiny Lazarus, backed by Mrs. Mahala Reed and Miss Kezia Kinkles, finally won the admiration of the crowd by bravely marching, their lives (and the fire-irons) in their hands, to lay the ghost or slay the intruder, whichever it might prove to be.

Cautiously Mr. Lazarus opened the kitchen door a few inches, with a rough and threatening, "Who's dar?"

"It's me, de shepherd ob dis flock," a stern

voice replied, and the door opened wide enough to admit a tall, thin, dark man with mournful eyes and a decidedly ministerial nose and mouth.

The trio within fell back a little, for, though they were exceedingly fond of their minister and had been anxiously awaiting his arrival, there was that in his face and voice now which froze the welcome on their lips. Without a word they led the way to the once more brilliant hall, where peace and happiness had been restored by the report of those who had been listening and peeping at the crack of the kitchen door.

The elder's "sheep" now flocked around him, and Aunt Susan hastily and triumphantly threw open the dining-room doors, while Mr. Columbus Smackum (spokesman elect) announced in stentorian tones: "De feas' is spread an' we only waits de leadin' ob our honored gues' an' parstor 'fore we perceeds to clean de boa'd."

"One minute, Broder Smackum," said Elder Jones, raising his hands benediction style to command silence. "As de shepherd ob dis flock, an' not as de honored gues', I am here dis night, an' I kin tell yer dat de bleatin' dat comes to my years soun's pow'ful mo' like de voice ob de goat dan ob de lamb! Befor' we goes inter dat lubly and temptin' table I wants all ob yer here present what calls 'emse'ves stric'ly hones', an' is members in good standin' in

Ebenezer Church, fur ter take dere stan' agin de souf wall—fardes from dat dinin'-room.''

Like one man the righteous throng swung southward.

''I's glad, brederin an' sisters, if yer all b'long dar on de souf side, an' in de sunshine ob de Lord's approval, rader dan on de norf side, whar de win' ob his wraf an' curse sweeps ober yer; but be resured, be resured, dat if any stan' dar er-callin' ob hisse'f hones', when de bran' ob de thief res' upon his soul, he is er-layin' up jedgment agin hisse'f in de las' day!''

The crowd swayed uneasily toward the center of the hall, but presently settled back against the south wall.

'' 'Pervide things hones' in de sight ob all men,' is what de Scriptur' teach us,'' continued the pastor. ''Now look fru dem do's as yer stan' opposite,''—every eye followed the direction of the long black finger as it pointed to the table,—''each one on yer look straight at de donation what yer brung or sent, an' den look in yer own heart an' see if dat was 'pervided hones' ' in de sight ob de pusson whose house it lef' 'fore it come here.''

A faint murmur, almost a groan was the only answer.

''Brederin an' sisters,'' resumed the elder, ''dat food in dar, 'licious as it look an sabery as it smell, would stick in de froat ob any hones'

pusson dat tried to swaller it, as de apple did in Adam's froat." (Visions of goiter-like deformities caused many of the fair hands present to seek the reassurance of touch.) "Better is a dinner ob yarbs, fr'en's, what's come by hones', dan de stalded ox what war hooked from his crib!" (Sounds of sobs and murmurs of "Lord! L-o-r-d!" from the assembly.)

"Now in de words ob de good Book," continued Elder Jones, seeing signs of penitence in their great distress, "'be not cas' down,' fur, brederin, de Lord neber yet 'low a temptation fur to come to any man 'thout pervidin' a do' of 'scape; an' if de do' be narrer an' so low dat it scrape de skin offen yer as yer makes yer 'scape, who'se yer got ter thank fur makin' it nec'sary fur ter use it?' (Faint signs of approval from the few present who had not contributed to the feast.)

"Now here's de do' ob 'scape in dis temptation," resumed the pastor, mopping his shining brow with an enormous handkerchief. "Yer can each one 'store to de owner in de sight ob de Lord de victuals what yer fotch here, unteched as to tastin'!" (Loud sobs and groans.) "To resalt yer min's an' screw up yer courage we will all jine in singin' one verse ob 'Zion is a hard road to trabel,' an' den while Mr. Tobe Watkins gibs us a verse of 'De debil's hard arter my soul,' each penitent will 'sume dere

wraps, an' geder from de dinin'-room whateber dey brung or sant, an' kerry it back to de place what dey fotch it frum.

"I ax nothin' onreason'ble, de Lord ax nothin' onreason'ble. He know our frame, he 'members we is dus'—coal-dus' when we ack dis here way," continued the faithful elder. "If it's beyon' yer 'strength ter 'fess yer fault ter yer missusses, jes' leabe yer t'ings at dere do's and ring de bells, an' when yer done it come wid clean han's an' pure hearts to my house on Goat Alley, an' he'p yerse'ves freely to de barrel ob applies an' de bushel ob ches'nuts what Uncle Adam an' Aunt Hannah Norris done pervided hones' in de sight ob all men—an' may de Lord be wid yer an' furgib yer!"

There were tearful murmurs of "Amen! Amen!" and brokenly the voices took up the strains of "Zion is a hard road to trabel."

As the last startling notes of "De debil's hard arter my soul" shot from the throat of Mr. Tobe Watkins, the door closed upon the bearer of almost the last dainty which had so lately crowned the Thanksgiving board.

The ladies of the house had already shrunk off weeping to the upper story and laid aside their borrowed finery, but were too far overcome with the contending emotions produced by the events of the evening to participate in the humble entertainment provided at their

pastor's; so after that brave black soldier of the cross had let himself out into the night air and gone to join his newly washed black sheep, the home party, with the addition of the three or four who had within the last hour grown proud of what had before looked like stinginess but had now become honesty, sat down to partake of the "fo' ole hens, couple ob cakes, an' doughnuts" which had not been "stole from de missus, case dar warn't no missus dar to steal 'em frum."

Some of the robbed housekeepers of Greenville were amazed that night, when their bells were answered, to find at their front doors pitchers, pans, buckets, baskets, boxes, paper bags, in fact, every conceivable sort of package containing miscellaneous goodies.

Courage did not sustain all of the "penitents" so far, however, the supply failing not a few just as they reached their own doors. It was therefore rather a slim and subdued little party that partook of apples and chestnuts at the parsonage in Goat Alley that Thanksgiving night; but Elder Jones did not feel discouraged, "fur," said he to Mr. Turtleback, "in all dese times of 'citement yer mus' spec' dar'll be some chaff in wid de wheat, which will natcherly sif' out, an' dis night we kin hol' Thanksgibin' ober de fac' dat we is got a leetle measure of de good grain anyhow!"

EZRA'S THANKSGIVIN' OUT WEST *

Eugene Field

Ezra had written a letter to the home folks, and in it he had complained that never before had he spent such a weary, lonesome day as this Thanksgiving Day had been. Having finished this letter, he sat for a long time gazing idly into the open fire that snapped cinders all over the hearth-stone and sent its red forks dancing up the chimney to join the winds that frolicked and gamboled across the Kansas prairies that raw November night. It had rained hard all day, and was cold; and although the open fire made every honest effort to be cheerful, Ezra, as he sat in front of it in the wooden rocker and looked down into the glowing embers, experienced a dreadful feeling of loneliness and homesickness.

"I'm sick o' Kansas," said Ezra to himself. "Here I've been in this plaguey country for goin' on a year, and—yes, I'm sick of it, pow-

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erful sick of it. What a miser'ble Thanksgivin' this has been! They don't know what Thanksgivin' is out this way. I wish I was back in ol' Mass'chusetts—that's the country for *me,* and they hev the kind o' Thanksgivin' I like!"

Musing in this strain, while the rain went patter-patter on the window-panes, Ezra saw a strange sight in the fireplace—yes, right among the embers and the crackling flames Ezra saw a strange, beautiful picture unfold and spread itself like a panorama.

"How very wonderful!" murmured the young man. Yet he did not take his eyes away, for the picture soothed him and he loved to look upon it.

"It is a pictur' of long ago," said Ezra, softly. "I had like to forgot it, but now it comes back to me as nat'ral-like as an ol' friend. An' I seem to be a part of it, an' the feelin' of that time comes back with the pictur', too."

Ezra did not stir. His head rested upon his hand, and his eyes were fixed upon the shadows in the firelight.

"It is a pictur' of the ol' home," said Ezra to himself. "I am back there in Belchertown, with the Holyoke hills up north an' the Berkshire mountains a-loomin' up gray an' misty-like in the western horizon. Seems as if it wuz early mornin'; everything is still, and it is so cold when we boys crawl out o' bed that, if it wuzn't

Thanksgivin' mornin', we'd crawl back again an' wait for Mother to call us. But it *is* Thanksgivin' mornin', an' we're goin' skatin' down on the pond. The squealin' o' the pigs has told us it is five o'clock, and we must hurry; we're goin' to call by for the Dickerson boys an' Hiram Peabody, an' we've got to hyper! Brother Amos gets on 'bout half o' my clo'es, and I get on 'bout half o' his, but it's all the same; they are stout, warm clo'es, and they're big enough to fit any of us boys—Mother looked out for that when she made 'em. When we go downstairs we find the girls there, all bundled up nice an' warm—Mary an' Helen an' Cousin Irene. They're goin' with us, an' we all start out tiptoe and quiet-like so's not to wake up the ol' folks. The ground is frozen hard; we stub our toes on the frozen ruts in the road. When we come to the minister's house, Laura is standin' on the front stoop, a-waitin' for us. Laura is the minister's daughter. She's a friend o' Sister Helen's—pretty as a dagerr'otype, an' gentle-like and tender. Laura lets me carry her skates, an' I'm glad of it, although I have my hands full already with the lantern, the hockies, and the rest. Hiram Peabody keeps us waitin', for he has overslept himself; an' when he comes trottin' out at last the girls make fun of him—all except Sister Mary, an' she sort o' sticks up for Hiram, an' we're all so 'cute we

kind o' calc'late we know the reason why.

"And now," said Ezra, softly, "the pictur' changes; seems as if I could see the pond. The ice is like a black lookin'-glass, and Hiram Peabody slips up the first thing, an' down he comes lickety-split, an' we all laugh—except Sister Mary, an' *she* says it is very imp'lite to laugh at other folks' misfortunes. Ough! how cold it is, and how my fingers ache with the frost when I take off my mittens to strap on Laura's skates! But, oh, how my cheeks burn! And how careful I am not to hurt Laura, an' how I ask her if that's 'tight enough,' an' how she tells me 'jist a little tighter,' and how we two keep foolin' along till the others hev gone an' we are left alone! An' how quick I get my *own* skates strapped on—none o' your newfangled skates with springs an' plates an' clamps an' such, but honest, ol'-fashioned wooden ones with steel runners that curl up over my toes, an' have a bright brass button on the end! How I strap 'em and lash 'em and buckle 'em on! An' Laura waits for me an' tells me to be sure to get 'em on tight enough—why, bless me! after I once got 'em strapped on, if them skates hed come off, the feet wud ha' come with 'em! An' now away we go—Laura an' me. Around the bend—near the medder where Si Barker's dog killed a woodchuck last summer—we meet the rest. We forget all about the cold. We run races

an' play snap-the-whip, an' cut all sorts o' didoes, an' we never mind the pick'rel-weed that is froze in on the ice an' trips us up every time we cut the outside edge; an' then we boys jump over the air-holes, an' the girls stan' by an' scream an' tell us they know we're a-goin' to drownd ourselves. So the hours go, an' it is sun-up at last, an' Sister Helen says we must be gettin' home. When we take our skates off, our feet feel as if they were wood. Laura has lost her tippet; I lend her mine, and she kind o' blushes. The old pond seems glad to have us go, and the fire-hangbird's nest in the willer-tree waves us good-by. Laura promises to come over to our house in the evenin', and so we break up.

"Seems now," continued Ezra, musingly—"seems now as if I could see us all at breakfast. The race on the pond has made us hungry, and Mother says she never knew anybody else's boys that had such capac'ties as hers. It is the Yankee Thanksgivin' breakfast—sausages an' fried potatoes, an' buckwheat cakes an' syrup—maple syrup, mind ye, for Father has his own sugar-bush, and there was a big run o' sap last season. Mother says, 'Ezry, an' Amos, won't you never get through eatin'? We want to clear off the table, for there's pies to make, an' nuts to crack, and laws sakes alive! the turkey's got to be stuffed yit!' Then how we all fly round!

Mother sends Helen up into the attic to get a squash while Mary's makin' the pie-crust. Amos an' I crack the walnuts—they call 'em hickory-nuts out in this pesky country of sage-brush and pasture-land. The walnuts are hard, and it's all we can do to crack 'em. Ev'ry once 'n a while one on 'em slips outer our fingers an' goes dancin' over the floor or flies into the pan Helen is squeezin' pumpkin into through the col'nder. Helen says we're shif'less an' good for nothin' but frivolin'; but Mother tells us how to crack the walnuts so's not to let 'em fly all over the room, an' so's not to be all jammed to pieces like the walnuts was down at the party at the Peasleys' last winter. An' now here comes Tryphena Foster, with her gingham gown an' muslin apron on; her folks have gone up to Amherst for Thanksgivin', an' Tryphena has come over to help our folks get dinner. She thinks a great deal o' Mother, 'cause Mother teaches her Sunday-school class an' says Tryphena oughter marry a missionary. There is bustle everywhere, the rattle uv pans an' the clatter of dishes; an' the new kitch'n stove begins to warm up an' git red, till Helen loses her wits an' is flustered, an' sez she never could git the hang o' that stove's dampers.

"An' now," murmured Ezra, gently, as a tone of deeper reverence crept into his voice, "I can see Father sittin' all by himself in the

parlor. Father's hair is very gray, and there are wrinkles on his honest old face. He is lookin' through the winder at the Holyoke hills over yonder, and I can guess he's thinkin' of the time when he wuz a boy like me an' Amos, an' useter climb over them hills an' kill rattlesnakes an' hunt partridges. Or doesn't his eyes quite reach the Holyoke hills? Do they fall kind o' lovingly but sadly on the little buryin'-ground jest beyond the village? Ah! Father knows that spot, an' he loves it, too, for there are treasures there whose memory he wouldn't swap for all the world could give. So, while there is a kind o' mist in Father's eyes, I can see he is dreamin'-like of sweet an' tender things, and a-communin' with memory—hearin' voices I never heard, an' feeling the tech of hands I never pressed; an' seein' Father's peaceful face, I find it hard to think of a Thanksgivin' sweeter than Father's is.

"The pictur' in the firelight changes now," said Ezra, "an' seems as if I wuz in the old frame meetin'-house. The meetin'-house is on the hill, and meetin' begins at half-pas' ten. Our pew is well up in front—seems as if I could see it now. It has a long red cushion on the seat, and in the hymn-book rack there is a Bible an' a couple of Psalmodies. We walk up the aisle slow, and Mother goes in first; then comes Mary, then me, then Helen, then Amos,

and then Father. Father thinks it is jest as well to have one o' the girls set in between me an' Amos. The meetin'-house is full, for everybody goes to meetin' Thanksgivin' Day. The minister reads the proclamation an' makes a prayer, an' then he gives out a psalm, an' we all stan' up an' turn round an' join the choir. Sam Merritt has come up from Palmer to spend Thanksgivin' with the ol' folks, an' he is singin' tenor to-day in his ol' place in the choir. Some folks say he sings wonderful well, but *I* don't like Sam's voice. Laura sings soprano in the choir, and Sam stands next to her an' holds the book.

"Seems as if I could hear the minister's voice, full of earnestness an' melody, comin' from way up in his little round pulpit. He is tellin' us why we should be thankful, an', as he quotes Scriptur' an' Dr. Watts, we boys wonder how anybody can remember so much of the Bible. Then I get nervous and worried. Seems to me the minister was never comin' to lastly, and I find myself wonderin' whether Laura is listenin' to what the preachin' is about, or is writin' notes to Sam Merritt in the back of the tune-book. I get thirsty, too, and I fidget about till Father looks at me, and Mother nudges Helen, and Helen passes it along to me with interest.

"An' then," continues Ezra, in his revery, "when the last hymn is given out an' we stan'

up agin an' join the choir, I am glad to see that Laura is singin' outer the book with Miss Hubbard, the alto. An' goin' out o' meetin' I kind of edge up to Laura and ask her if I kin have the pleasure of seein' her home.

"An' now we boys all go out on the Common to play ball. The Enfield boys have come over, and, as all the Hampshire County folks know, they are tough fellers to beat. Gorham Polly keeps tally, because he has got the newest jackknife—oh, how slick it whittles the old broomhandle Gorham picked up in Packard's store an' brought along jest to keep tally on! It is a great game of ball; the bats are broad and light, and the ball is small and soft. But the Enfield boys beat us at last; leastwise they make 70 tallies to our 58, when Heman Fitts knocks the ball over into Aunt Dorcas Eastman's yard and Aunt Dorcas comes out an' picks up the ball an' takes it into the house, an' we have to stop playin'. Then Phineas Owens allows he can flop any boy in Belchertown, an' Moses Baker takes him up, an' they wrassle like two tartars, till at last Moses tuckers Phineas out an' downs him as slick as a whistle.

"Then we all go home, for Thanksgivin' dinner is ready. Two long tables have been made into one, and one of the big table-cloths Gran'ma had when she set up housekeepin' is spread over 'em both. We all set round—

Father, Mother, Aunt Lydia Holbrook, Uncle Jason, Mary, Helen, Tryphena Foster, Amos, and me. How big an' brown the turkey is, and how good it smells! There are bounteous dishes of mashed potato, turnip, an' squash, and the celery is very white and cold, the biscuits are light an' hot, and the stewed cranberries are red as Laura's cheeks. Amos and I get the drumsticks; Mary wants the wishbone to put over the door for Hiram, but Helen gets it. Poor Mary! she always *did* have to give up to 'rushin' Helen,' as we call her. The pies—oh, what pies Mother makes; no dyspepsia in 'em, but good-nature an' good health an' hospitality! Pumpkin pies, mince an' apple too, and then a big dish of pippins an' russets an' bell-flowers, an', last of all, walnuts with cider from the Zebrina Dickerson farm! I tell ye, there's a Thanksgivin' dinner for ye! That's what we get in old Belchertown; an' that's the kind of livin' that makes the Yankees so all-fired good an' smart.

"But the best of all," said Ezra, very softly, to himself—"oh, yes, the best scene in all the pictur' is when evenin' comes, when the lamps are lit in the parlor, when the neighbors come in, and when there is music an' singin' an' games. An' it's this part o' the pictur' that makes me homesick now and fills my heart with a longin' I never had before; an' yet it sort o' mellows an' comforts me, too. Miss Serena Cad-

well, whose beau was killed in the war, plays on the melodeon, and we all sing—all on us, men, women folks, an' children. Sam Merritt is there, an' he sings a tenor song about love. The women sort of whisper round that he's goin' to be married to a Palmer lady nex' spring, an' I think to myself I never heard better singin' than Sam's. Then we play games—proverbs, buzz, clap-in-clap-out, copenhagen, fox-an'-geese, button-button-who's-got-the-button, spin-the-platter, go-to-Jerusalem, my-ship's-come-in, and all the rest. The ol' folks play with the young folks just as nat'ral as can be; and we all laugh when Deacon Hosea Cowles hez to measure six yards of love-ribbon with Miss Hepsy Newton, and cut each yard with a kiss; for the deacon hez been sort o' purrin' round Miss Hepsy for goin' on two years. Then, aft'r a while, when Mary an' Helen bring in the cookies, nut-cakes, cider, an' apples, Mother says, 'I don't b'lieve we're goin' to hev enough apples to go round; Ezry, I guess I'll have to get you to go down-cellar for some more.' Then I says, 'All right, Mother, I'll go, providin' some one'll go along an' hold the candle.' An' when I say this I look right at Laura, an' she blushes. Then Helen, just for meanness, says, 'Ezry, I s'pose you ain't willin' to have your fav'rite sister go down-cellar with you an' catch her death o' cold?' But Mary, who hez

been showin' Hiram Peabody the phot'graph album for more'n an hour, comes to the rescue an' makes Laura take the candle, and she shows Laura how to hold it so it won't go out.

"The cellar is warm an' dark. There are cobwebs all between the rafters an' everywhere else except on the shelves where Mother keeps the butter an' eggs an' other things that would freeze in the butt'ry upstairs. The apples are in bar'ls up against the wall, near the potater-bin. How fresh and sweet they smell! Laura thinks she sees a mouse, an' she trembles an' wants to jump up on the pork-bar'l, but I tell her that there sha'n't no mouse hurt her while I'm round; and I mean it, too, for the sight of Laura a-tremblin' makes me as strong as one of Father's steers. 'What kind of apples do you like best, Ezry?' asks Laura—'russets or greenin's or crow-eggs or bell-flowers or Baldwins or pippins?' 'I like the Baldwins best,' says I, 'coz they've got red cheeks just like yours.' 'Why, Ezry Thompson! how you talk!' says Laura. 'You oughter be ashamed of yourself!' But when I get the dish filled up with apples there ain't a Baldwin in all the lot that can compare with the bright red of Laura's cheeks. An' Laura knows it, too, an' she sees the mouse agin, an' screams, and then the candle goes out, and we are in a dreadful stew. But I, bein' almost a man, contrive to bear up under

it, and knowin' she is an orph'n, I comfort an' encourage Laura the best I know how, and we are almost upstairs when Mother comes to the door and wants to know what has kep' us so long. Jest as if Mother doesn't know! Of course she does; an' when Mother kisses Laura good-by that night, there is in the act a tenderness that speaks more sweetly than even Mother's words.

"It is so like Mother," mused Ezra; "so like her, with her gentleness an' clinging love. Hers is the sweetest pictur' of all, and hers the best love."

Dream on, Ezra; dream of the old home with its dear ones, its holy influences, and its precious inspiration—Mother. Dream on in the far-away firelight; and as the angel hand of memory unfolds these sacred visions, with thee and them shall abide, like a divine comforter, the spirit of Thanksgiving.

SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR*

Mary Mayo Crenshaw

"TURKEYS, Ben!"

"Gosh!" cried Ben Winston, inelegantly, throwing down his book and, willow wand in hand, rushing to the defense. Here, when Margaretta had fixed up her little garden so nicely, those old turkeys had to keep coming down the road to ruin everything. What did they care about a fence? They just jumped on it and down into the garden and began to scratch, scratch. That man up the road certainly ought to keep his turkeys out of the way.

"Them turkeys," remarked Mrs. Batty, the laundress, putting down a full basket, "belongs to Mr. Hargrave up the lane a piece. He's let everything go to weeds up there, they say—just sticks on his porch mopin', an' don't take no interest in nothin'. His father, old Colonel Hargrave, was a nice gentleman. He was awful ambitious for his son, too. Sent him off to a university to get book-learnin'. About twelve or

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thirteen years ago Mr. John was a real nice-lookin' young feller, though folks say he's seedy enough now, all gone to pieces like." She paused for breath and sat down voluminously on a bench.

"What happened?" asked Ben, pausing in the turkey round-up.

"Oh, 'twas all because of a flashy girl that lived over to Covington. Yet nothin' would do but Mr. John should fall in love with her. It must have been bitter for the colonel. Still, seein' he couldn't help himself, he agreed to the match, an' the two was to be married. But land! About that time there come to Covington some stage folks, an' lo an' behold, the girl up an' run off with the leadin' man! A good riddance of bad rubbish, somethin' to be thankful for, I'd say. Stop that, Joey!" she interrupted herself to exclaim, for Joey was shooing away the turkeys that Ben was trying to herd.

"Here, you, Joey-boy," Mrs. Batty went on, patting the seat beside her, "you set down here by your mammy an' cut your stick. You don't mean no harm, you poor innocent, now, do you?"

Mrs. Winston, who had been helping Ben assemble the turkeys, came up, fanning her heated cheeks with her garden hat. "Now we can gossip for a minute," she said, her face lighting up with her pretty smile. "You mean to say

that this Mr. Hargrave, even after such a long time, has not recovered from being jilted?''

''Seems that a-way. Folks seldom sees him, but they tell me he's sore on everybody, 'specially women. Well, Joey an' me, we'll be travelin' on. Good mornin' to you.'' With her hand in Joey's, off went Mrs. Batty.

And off, too, went Ben, who had at last rounded up the flock and now drove them along the side of the purling brook with its wild-flower border, on up the crooked road to Mr. Hargrave's. The boy was very careful not to touch the gawky birds. He knew how to make the wand whistle against the tree-trunks, getting the result of scampering pink shanks and, from the red-headed turkey-cock, angry and insistent gobbling.

Up there at the big house sat Mr. Hargrave smoking on his porch, as usual, with tangled beard, shabby clothes, and down-at-heel slippers. As usual, too, he eyed young Ben and the turkeys coldly, vouchsafing no thanks.

''Sir,'' began Ben, also as usual, ''don't you want to hire me to take care of your turkeys?''

''I've told you before,'' answered Mr. Hargrave, in that cutting way he had, ''I do not. Boys are no good. You can't trust them. Just when they're needed most, they run off and leave you in the lurch. I know them.''

Ben shifted to the other foot. '' I wouldn't

run off and leave you in the lurch—or if I did run off, it would be because I had to, and I'd leave somebody in my place. Margaretta likes me to be responsible."

Most people would have smiled sympathetically upon the determined young khaki-clad figure standing so resolutely urging his point, but apparently Mr. Hargrave had got out of the habit of smiling.

"Besides," continued Ben, earnestly "your turkeys look kind of scrubby. If I was 'tending to them, I'd get them fat. You better try me."

Mr. Hargrave took his feet down from the porch rail. "Stop arguing," he commanded positively. "I don't want any boy about. You'd be more of a nuisance to me than the turkeys, and I don't know why I have them, to tell the truth. Now go along." He extended a stern forefinger in the direction of the road.

So Ben went along. However, he was very persistent. This he regarded as a temporary rout, not defeat. Ever since he could remember, Margaretta and he had lived in a big city where she had taught school, for her husband had died when Ben was a small boy. Always during the city years, she had longed to go back to the country, having been raised a country girl. Margaretta would describe to Ben the things she loved in the country: rose-gold sunsets over mountain-tops, valley views, the smell of new-

mown hay, a black-faced moo-cow, new-laid eggs, fresh vegetables, country butter. Most of all, oh, more than all these put together, she wanted, longed for, absolutely must have a little garden. She loved flowers, did Margaretta. She used to tell Ben that they seemed to her like little baby children, just waked up from a nap and waiting to be kissed.

If you see anything clearly enough, and keep on seeing it and wanting it badly enough, someway it comes to you. So here were Ben and Margaretta established in the country, with violets and lilies-of-the-valley springing up in a little garden. There was that to be thankful for. But the marauding turkeys!

Fifteen-year-old Ben, too, had his craving. He had discovered that there was an agricultural college in Covington, seventeen miles away, where they taught you how to raise poultry and pigs and horses. That was the place he was going to, sure. Of course it would be expensive. Ben would sit very still with an intent look on his face that Margaretta knew.

"Planning, son?"

"A little."

Anyway, the college was closed now, for it was early summer. Ben, lying in the hammock, looking over Margaretta's brightly illustrated floral catalogues, would be brought to his feet by the cry, "Turkeys!!!"

Therefore, as the awkward straggling birds continued to descend, tearing down Margaretta's pretty flowers, Ben, nothing if not practical, decided that the moment had come for action. Next time they appeared, he headed old Strutting Sam, as they had named the pompous, domineering leader, straight for home. Strutting Sam was a king of fowls. He was a great brilliant bronze turkey-gobbler of noble carriage. A proud crest shone upon his crimson head, and when he was indignant, which was most of the time, his white-edged tail spread out like a giant fan, his barred wings opened wide, and all his feathers fluffed up; he looked as big as a barrel. If you could start Sam up the road, all the rest of the flock would follow—mother turkey-hens, saucy poults, little chicks, would string out after their lord and master. At first Ben had not realized that. Now that he knew, it simplified the problem of the drive.

To one familiar with the boy's sunburned face, it would have been clear that to-day's return was not as those that had gone before. His conduct upon arriving at the big house justified the belief, for, saying nothing at all to Mr. Hargrave, he seated himself upon a big rock near the turkeys. If Sam so much as turned a red-rimmed round eye toward the road, Ben was upon him in a flash.

Mr. Hargrave surveyed the scene in silence from the porch. He smoked various pipefuls, cleared his throat, banged the screen door every time he went in or out of the house. Neverthless, he did not say a word.

Finally the sunlight ceased to flicker between the boughs of the apple-trees. Shadows grew long, stars began to come out overhead. The bigger turkeys, with swift swoops, flew up into the gnarled branches and settled themselves for the night. Mother turkey-hens, with much fussy clucking and to-do, assembled their little ones under their soft feathers. Ben, hungry and a little homesick, rose. It was only then that Mr. Hargrave spoke.

"What are you doing here, young man, trespassing on my grounds?"

"Taking care of the turkeys. They're mighty skinny, all except Strutting Sam. Can't you give me something to feed to them to-morrow?"

"No, I can't. Or at least, I won't. Neither was I aware that one of the turkeys was named Sam. Your own invention, no doubt. Ahem! Tell me, who gave you the right to take care of my turkeys?"

"Somebody must. They are ruining Margaretta's garden."

"Is Margaretta your sweetheart? Not that I'm interested."

"My sweetheart? Oh, no. Margaretta's my mother. She's been planning to have some flowers as far back as I can remember. Now she's got them, I'm going to keep the turkeys out of them until I can get some wire fencing."

Mr. Hargrave, strange man that he was, rose and disappeared into the house, banging the screen door behind him.

Every day after that Ben came back and seated himself in the shady orchard that was close to the house. He did not again mention the question of turkey-food, but began to bring a mash of soft bread and milk that Margaretta fixed for him, and would feed it to the little fowls. Soon he was giving oats to the thin mothers, keeping greedy Sam, with his sharp beak and spurs, "more Turk than turkey," from gobbling it all up. The boy's face came more and more to wear his "planning look," as Margaretta called it.

Sometimes Mr. Hargrave was on the porch and sometimes he was not. One day when he was there, Ben walked up the steps and held out a government pamphlet. It was entitled "Turkey Raising." "Margaretta sent to Washington for this," was his determined explanation.

Mr. Hargrave motioned with his eyebrows for Ben to put the pamphlet on the porch table. When Ben left for home that evening, the pamphlet still lay as he had left it, but next day

when he salvaged it for his own enlightenment, it smelled strongly of tobacco.

That day something happened. Mr. Hargrave lounged down to Ben's side. The turkey nurse was buried in the pamphlet, his mind so deeply absorbed in questions of ranges, nests, coops, and such, that he jumped when the tall man's shadow fell across the page.

"Since," observed Mr. Hargrave, with an extra edge of gruffness on his voice, "you've hired yourself for this job without being invited,—pretty cool, I will say,—and since this is Saturday, I suppose I must pay you." He thrust something into Ben's hand, went into the house, and, of course, banged the screen door. Ben, clutching the envelope that meant a wire fence for Margaretta's garden, grinned thankfully, and dropped his eyes again voraciously to his reading.

Ben Winston could never have told when or how a change came over Mr. Hargrave. It was very, very gradual, and at intervals there were recurrences of grouchiness, yet in time he and Mr. Hargrave were on a conversational basis, consulting together about the turkeys, and Mr. Hargrave was buying food for them; though grasshoppers, nuts, and acorns were all very well in their way, there was no denying that, as Ben had said, Mr. Hargrave's turkeys looked scrubby—always excepting the majorful Sam.

Mr. Hargrave began to talk, too, about other things. One of his pet subjects was women. They were no good; you couldn't depend upon them, he explained.

"Margaretta's not like that," protested loyal Ben.

Along toward the middle of August, Ben was seated with the "planning look" so stamped upon his face that Mr. Hargrave, who could be observant enough when he chose, inquired, "Well, what now, Napoleon? Planning the Italian campaign? Austria? Egypt?"

With a smile over Mr. Hargrave's funny ideas, the boy answered, "It's the fair. They have a fair in Covington on Labor Day and they give prizes for the best turkeys and chickens and things. Margaretta and me—we say why not take some turkeys to the fair?"

"You do, do you?"

"And let's put those we want to have try for the prizes off in a big pen and get them fat."

Mr. Hargrave shrugged his shoulders. "As you like, General. You seem to do what you want to, anyway."

When Labor Day came it was Margaretta and Ben who took the improved turkeys to the Covington Fair, for Mr. Hargrave positively refused to go. Suspiciously in the nick of time, a wire-netted truck mysteriously appeared, carrying the feathered flock nicely. The question of

competing for prizes had been abandoned, as, although Mr. Hargrave called him "Napoleon," there was not time enough for the planner to get the turkeys in really prime condition. "Next year for the prizes," said Ben.

Instead, the project was to sell some of the turkeys. Ben, the morning after the fair, placed a respectable sum of money in Mr. Hargrave's hand. "It was Margaretta," he explained. "People said our turkeys were 'most too thin so I wasn't selling many till Margaretta began to help and then they sold fine. One man said he wanted to engage a turkey for Thanksgiving." The boy stopped short. His lips parted slightly, and his eyes darkened in the planning look.

"I gather from your concentrated expression, General," remarked Mr. Hargrave, packing his pipe, "that you have an idea. In good time, I presume I may know its import."

"Aw!" grinned Ben, over such dictionary language.

Next morning he came up to the porch with a sheaf of papers held out in his hand, which upon being consulted by Mr. Hargrave, were found to state that fresh turkeys for Thanksgiving Day could be secured from the Hargrave Farm, if engaged ahead. The paper went on to mention the price per pound.

"Just what may these be?" quizzically demanded Mr. Hargrave, wrinkling his nose.

"It was Margaretta. She typed them. She thought it would be nice for you to send them out, if you like them. She can type a whole lot more."

Mr. Hargrave assumed a thoughtful mien. "I was trying to remember," he declared, "whether Napoleon ever had a mother. I suppose even women may have good ideas—after all, it is the exception that proves any rule. Well, have it as you will. By the way, what do I pay Mar—Mrs. Winston for doing all this typing?"

"Pay Margaretta? Oh, nothing. She's a partner."

Mr. Hargrave looked up at Ben, standing before him. "Are you a partner?" he inquired.

"Sure," answered Ben.

From then on, things moved rapidly. Mr. Hargrave developed real interest. A carpenter came and put up pens, cut barrels into nests and filled them with straw, made low perches for small poults and, for bigger ones and young cockerels, constructed roosts in the trees with cleated inclines leading up to the branches. There was a shed to shelter hens and their broods during rain-storms. Under elm-trees in a clover meadow some distance from the house, a big range was fenced off, in which to fatten those turkeys that were to be sold for Thanksgiving feasts. All was done exactly according to

the directions of the government pamphlet, which grew sadly dog-eared from constant use. Furthermore, clutches of big turkey eggs for setting were brought, and little pedigreed turkey-chicks from which to raise stock. And it was Mr. Hargrave himself who tied a bell upon the neck of an overadventurous mother who was inclined to ramble unduly far with her children. Actually, Mr. Hargrave's face began to take on a planning look, too. Sometimes he forgot and let himself laugh aloud.

An interested overseer of all this activity was Strutting Sam. He was all over the place. His burnished plumage gleamed gorgeously, his appearance was majestic. Prosperity made Sam more resplendent and, if possible, more arrogant. He gobbled and strutted and showed off constantly. Ben was of the opinion that Sam thought it was all being done just for him!

On the Monday before Thanksgiving, Mr. Hargrave went across the fields to the carpenter's to see that the crates were in readiness for the promised turkey-delivery next day. He and Ben had been very particular about the proportions—as per pamphlet—of these crates. They must be about two feet high, twelve or fourteen inches wide, big enough for the bird to stand up in, but not big enough for him to turn around, thus rumpling his feathers. These were for such fowls as were to be shipped, while

many of them were to go in the truck direct to purchasers in or near Covington. The response to Margaretta's slips had been most encouraging.

Meantime, Ben remained in charge of the fat turkeys that preened bright plumage and stretched long necks in the big pen where they had, for the last two weeks, been fattening for the holiday market. There were now all shades and varieties of turkeys—White Hollands, with snowy feathers and rosy legs, rich Bourbon Reds, steel-gray Narragansetts, buff turkeys, lustrous black turkeys, slate-blue turkeys, dark-limbed Bronzes. Ben especially prized these last, which are the real North American native turkey, and show yet a wild strain. All legs had been rubbed with sweet-oil, every crop was full, and now it was important that they should not be frightened, for turkeys are loose-feathered birds and nothing must mar their glossy sheen. Fortunately the day was clear.

Into this pleasant silence charged red-faced Joey. "Ben!" he screamed. "Fire! Mammy say fire; Joey call Ben. You go, please, Ben," he pleaded, tears streaming down his cheeks.

Ben, thoroughly alarmed, bounded up. "Joey," he ordered decisively, "sit here, watch gate. Keep looking here, right here at this gate." With his hand Ben touched the gate in order to focus Joey's attention upon it. Then he

sped off on lightning feet to Margaretta's aid.

Obedient Joey sat looking fixedly at the gate, right at the very spot that Ben had touched. If a turkey clucked, Joey longed to look at it, but, although he stole a glance or two, it was only to peep quickly and then again to fasten his eyes on the gate. And it was just this rapt attention that caused the trouble. His gaze concentrated upon the staple that held the gate closed. Joey slowly took in the fact that this staple was a nice, white, smooth stick, about eight inches long, all ready to be whittled. A yearning for it swelled in Joey's breast. At intervals his arm stole out toward the staple, only to be drawn back as though it had stung him. The conflict did not last long; the nebulous darkness that was the mind of the poor innocent could not harbor two ideas at once. Soon Joey lost all consciousness of the turkeys and slowly withdrew the tempting stick, not heeding the soft thump of the gate as it swung wide open. Whittling away at his treasure, in the bright sunlight of the clover meadow, at last Joey fell asleep, so that he did not hear Swaggering Sam invite his women-folks and descendants out to take the air, nor did Joey see Sam lead them magnificently forth from the enclosure down the inviting road along the brook. Presently, when Joey awakened with a frightened start, there were no turkeys to be seen. And always when in

trouble, he rushed off to find Mammy and hide his head in her apron.

In the interval Ben had reached his home by the short cut through the woods, and found that, with the aid of the capable Mrs. Batty, Margaretta had put out the fire. It had been only a question of a burned table-cloth that had flared up from a carelessly dropped match. After stamping on the smoking embers to make sure that they were safe, Ben started back through the woods to his turkeys. Mrs. Batty, setting out for her own home, called out to him to tell Joey to follow her. But Ben arrived at Mr. Hargrave's to find neither Joey nor turkeys.

His immediate thought was that even in that little time Mr. Hargrave had made some unexpected disposition of the turkeys and dismissed Joey. Ben accordingly set out through the orchard for Mr. Hargrave's house to confirm his idea. A search through the house and orchard about it did not reveal Mr. Hargrave. It was then, after precious time had passed, it dawned upon Ben that possibly Joey had allowed the turkeys to escape. His heart beating with apprehension, he thought rapidly. He decided that the turkeys must have followed again the road by the brook, under the eternal fascination that water has for them. He would cut through the woods and get quickly to his home to head them off. He fervently hoped that no

dog would frighten them and spoil their fine appearance.

Just after Ben had disappeared toward the big house in search of Mr. Hargrave, that gentleman, well-pleased and stepping briskly, came across the fields from the carpenter's. His horrified gaze took in the swinging gate, the abandoned pen. His eyes blazed, he shook his fist. Where was that boy, Ben, who had undertaken to watch the turkeys so carefully? It was just as he had said. Boys were perfectly worthless. When you needed them most, off they went. This boy had seemed different, but, as it turned out, he was just like all the rest.

John Hargrave had not been interested in anything for years. The companionship, through the long summer, of a warm, enthusiastic young human being had awakened him, as it were, from his bad dream. Perhaps he was, albeit unconsciously, ripe for the change. In any event, at first unwillingly, then consentingly, he had let himself get drawn into the turkey project and had become really much interested. He had felt pride in their plump glossy mien, their freedom from poultry diseases. To-day, on the very eve of delivery, it was so highly important for them to be quiet, with no risk of tearing their barred wings, ruffling their plumage, soiling their newly oiled legs. And what if they had scattered to the woods? That would be

hopeless. The heavy undergrowth would catch their feathers, ruin their looks. It would, in that event, be impossible to get many of them back in time, and those who were rescued would probably be in forlorn and bedraggled condition, impossible to deliver to the people who had engaged them. Of course, they might have gone down the brook road. Anyway, John Hargrave decided he would find that boy and give him a piece of his mind.

As he, in this grim mood, drew near the Winston cottage, he became aware of a soft voice speaking cooingly: "Come into Margaretta's garden," it was saying, this gentle voice with the Southern accent. "Come scratch all you want to in Margaretta's garden until Ben comes to take you back home."

John Hargrave peered out from a shelter of undergrowth. A pretty lady, a very pretty lady, was disclosed, throwing wide the gate of a lovely little garden around which there was a woven wire fence five feet high, with barbed wire at the top to forbid intruders. This must, of course, be the neighbor, Margaretta, whose name had been uttered so many times in his home, yet whom he, unsociable being that he had been, had never even seen. What was it her son had said? *"Margaretta loves flowers as if they were little children."*

Yet here she was, actually inviting the tur-

keys to enter her garden. And, as he stood spellbound, he saw her run lightly into the house and emerge with a bowl of shelled corn, which she proceeded to drop enticingly before the stragglers, luring them too into the enclosure. Soon she had all the fowls inside and the gate was fastened. And oh, the devastation they caused! His turkeys! Scratch, scratch. Impulsively John Hargrave started forward to forbid the sacrifice. But he paused. How dainty she was with her shiny hair, her blue gown! He became conscious of his ragged beard. His eyes traveled to his shabby garments. Slowly he turned and went thoughtfully back up the brook road.

After all, Ben brought the turkeys home, unruffled and as glossy as ever, by the simple expedient of walking backward himself and scattering before them Margaretta's corn. Everything turned out all right, for the Thanksgiving sales were excellent. Mr. Hargrave was very friendly. When, tired but content, they parted that night, he said, casually, "Tell Mar—er—your mother, that if she likes, I will come for both of you to go to church on Thanksgiving Day—and old Nanny can fix up a turkey for us for dinner afterward."

"Thank you," answered Ben. Being practical, he added. "Sir, your buggy doesn't hold but two."

It was then that Mr. Hargrave showed a

touch of the old dryness. "Deliver the message as it was given to you," he said.

When he drove up to the Winston cottage on Thanksgiving Day, it was, to Ben's approving amazement, in a brand-new car. And Mr. Hargrave had no beard on his square-cut chin. Also Ben took in the fact that he wore a snappy new suit that was very becoming. Gee!

They drove to the Thanksgiving service through roads brilliantly edged with goldenrod and purple asters, past lovely glimpses of the foot-hills of the Alleghanies, softly blue in the hazy distance. There were great trees in their autumn coloring, showing all the shades of Strutting Sam, some of them red like his comb and wattles, some copperish bronze like his breast. Ben sniffed in the sweet odor of burning wood. He felt thankful just to be alive that day.

And the church in Covington was so pretty with its Thanksgiving decoration of yellow pumpkins, crimson apples, purple grapes, russet autumn leaves. Ben enjoyed the Thanksgiving hymn which opened the service:

For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and above us lies,
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

The clergyman preached a good sermon in which he spoke of our blessings. We all, he told them, have many, many things to be thankful for, if we would only realize it, and he enjoined them, at home, to count over some of them.

Then there came dinner at Mr. Hargrave's. It was a great surprise to Ben. Old colored Nanny, who had been cook there since Colonel Hargrave's day, had been told to get out silver which had not seen the light for years and years. There were nice white-and-gold dishes all set out on a gleaming damask table-cloth. In spite of the turkey-raid, there had been enough chrysanthemums in Margaretta's garden to make a pretty bouquet for a centerpiece. And that turkey stuffed with chestnuts! And those cranberries! And the pickled peaches! Surely, Mr. Hargrave, once started, went far.

Now that the concealing beard was gone, it developed that Mr. Hargrave could smile very nicely. He was smiling when he said, "The rector told us to name over things we had to be thankful for. You, Mar—Mrs. Winston, you have something to be thankful for in this constructive young Napoleon."

Margaretta's blue eyes rested lovingly upon her son. "While he," she softly answered, "has something to be thankful for in having made a friend."

Mr. Hargrave played with a spoon before him

for a minute. Then he said, "I have something to-day for which I am very thankful."

"Turkeys?" guessed Ben, who could see Sam strutting in the yard.

"Well—it has something to do with turkeys. Long years ago my father established a scholarship at the agricultural college. So far this year it has been vacant. It is mine to dispose of, but I—I have failed to pay attention to it. Now, I am happy to say, I have arranged for it to be given to a young turkey expert—if he wants it?" He looked questioningly at Ben.

"Oh, I will be so thankful," began Ben, but had to stop because there was a queer lump in his throat. So, because a boy does not like people to see tears in his eyes, even though of joy, he bent over his fine helping of Thanksgiving pudding.

HASHIMURA TOGO'S THANKSGIVING *

Wallace Irwin

To Editor Good Housekeep Magazine, who keep cheerful in spite of Holidays.

DEAREST SIR:

While annual yearly date of Thanksgive approach up, I enjoy pain in connection with my memory. Americans act so peculiar when thankful that I am not insured what to do. For instancely, I tell you what collapsed to me last Thanksgive Thursday:

I were employed for Gen. Cookery at domestic kitchen of Mrs. & Mr. Romeo Goober, East O'Rora, Ill.

"Togo," say Hon. Mrs., approaching up to me, "tomorrow shall be Thanksgive Day."

"What are origin of this joy?" I ask to know.

"Pilgrim 4 Fathers first invented it," she report. "In historical time of 1492, Hon. Miles Standish were setting on Plymouth Rock. 'We have no foods,' decry Hon. Miles. 'I have no

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appetite,' snuggest Hon. Jno. W. Alden, assistant Pilgrim. 'We should be thankful for that!' negotiate Hon. Miles, so Thankful Thursday were manufactured from that date."

"How you shall celebrate this patriotic festival?" I require.

"By eating it," decrop Hon. Mrs. "The more we eat, the more patriotic we become. On that Thursday date America are thankful about all sorts of calamities, while families group themselves around turkey to express gratitude and cranberry sauce."

"My heart stands upright to think of such cheerfulness!" I resort. "I shall rejoice tomorrow for to observe one American dinner where Kick & Peev are not invited."

"Tomorrow we expects to celebrate as usual," she report for sweetly smiling. "There will be 8 to dinner, to include my fattish Uncle Seth who equal 3 more. All my relatives is most sneerful particular about goods. So now will you please elope immediately to market for buy one turkey-chicken of 26 lbs. complete tenderness, 4 qts. cramberries of delicious sourness, 6 bunches celery-weed, and sufficient punkens to construct 2½ pies?"

"I go. At Gouge Bros. Market where was I observe sign, 'FAT TURKEY 35¢.' To see this, I feel very humorous about that High Cost of Life."

"Such delicious cheapness of bird!" I negotiate to Hon. Butcher who was there. "At such rates, how much would 2 turkies cost?"

"$22.80," he report for immediate arithmetic.

"Do you not promise fat turkey for 35¢?" I rake off.

"35¢ lb.," he snagger financially.

"I should like one (1) lb., please!" This from me.

"We do not sell broken sections. You must purchase complete bird," price $9.80." This from him.

"At such rates, folks can get rich by starving," I snagger.

No response from him. He go to icebox and fetch forth one enlarged fowel without any clothing on.

"This are nice fresh turkey," he satisfy.

"How you know he fresh?" I snuggest.

"Have he not been constantly on ice for 2 yrs? Nothing could be more fresher than that," depose Hon. Butch. I buy.

He sell me expensive celery-bouquet, price 75¢ per cluster. It seem disrespectful to eat such valuation. Also precious cramberries, price $1 for seldom quantities, added to $2.50 worth punkens for pies. I promenade homewards, carrying this valuable butchery and hoping no burglar would see me.

While I was thusly straggling along with bur-

dened back, one assorted dog, name of Hon. Fido, snux up behind of turkey and made smiling sniff-nose.

"Shoo!" I report. Hon. Fido stood waggishly saying nothing, but looking at Hon. Turkey with flirting eye. I was joyful to observe this, because Hon. Shakespeare say, "Them what dogs love must have many tender qualities."

Date of Thankful Thursday arrive up. By early a. m. of dawntime, I arose up and commenced. All a. m. that assorted dog Hon. Fido, set outside screen door. I permit him. I arrange Hon. Turkey to polite position and stuff his surprised interior with decorated crumbs. I satisfy him with salt & pepper.

About time of afternoon p. m., I could hear several thanksgivers scraping their footprints on rug. Their feet sounded quite hungry, yet I could not hear any words spoken more cheerful than Sunday. Hon. Turkey now send forth smiling smell of bakery, and I was glad to assist his importance.

Pretty soonly all take set-down to table.

"We got much to be thanksgiving for," report Hon. Goober with sharp knife. "Dinner is late as usual."

"Too bad weather are so full of dishagreeable qualities!" grubble Aunt Hannah with golden teeth.

"It were not thusly when I was a boy," re-

port Uncle Seth with grone. "Please pass the celery."

He make smack-taste of this foods, then flop it back with snubbed expression.

"I have tasted no respectable celery since 1841!" he holla baffably.

All enjoy depression by this report.

Next course was oysters, served with considerable rawness. Cousin Fred'rck make jab to these shelled fish.

"Don't!" holla Aunt Eliz, making horror with her nose.

"Why should not?" require Cousin Fred'rck while he swallow up.

"You are so young and yet dead already!" ollicute Aunt Eliz. "Toemain poison are sure to resume from this."

"Food contained less poison when I was a childhood," negotiate Uncle Seth.

"Bygone days has went!" extract Aunt Eliz with si & grone.

I go to kitchen for bring in delicious mulligan-tawny soup what I bought. While I were pouring this hot beveridge in plates, I notice slight smell of burn. It was Hon. Turkey in oven, becoming too feverish. So I took him out and put him by window where he be more comfortable.

I fetch soup in plates to all those thanksgivers.

"Canned!" they yellup together with voice of

sad chorus girls, while thrusting away plates.

"Nothing is real any more!" narrate Uncle Seth with dyspepsia. "Even turkies is deceptive. When boyhood days elapsed, I can remember how we was accustomed, on Thanksgive morning, to salute Hon, Turkey by chopping him in kneck with ax. We knew he was good to eat, because we seen how fresh he acted. But no more. Today, turkies lives like Eskimos—spending their old age on ice before meeting civilized persons. No respectable bird-dog would eat them."

I enjoy considerable alarm for this thanksgiving speech. Then, courageous like a Samurai, I retreat to kitchen for fetch forth Hon. Turkey. Hope thrilled my wrists and elbows as I entered kitchen for escort that sublime turkey—but O! ! ! I stand gast. I look to window where I left that sacred bird. Such things could not! And yet it was. Empty pan stood there, seeming entirely vacuum. Hon. Turkey had flewed away! !

I rosh by window and look earnestly to back yard. Yes! ! With thankful expression of tail, there stood Hon. Fido abducting Hon. Turkey across alley by wing.

"Come backwards!" I yellup. Hon. Fido show no impression from my talk. I lep through window 7½ feet to outside. Quickly reassuring my legs, I retreat after that slyly doggish an-

nimle, but he scromble up fence with hooked claws resembling cats. Too late for me! Turkey had escaped from my Bulgarian catch-up.

Mr. Editor, heroes is most brave when reporting failures. I do this considerably. So I drag together my soul and encroach toward dining-room, where I could hear those 8 thanksgivers complaining about everything. I walk in there carrying empty pan. Uncle Seth were just saying,

"Turkey are not what he used to be in 1868!"

"It are painful to look one in face!" report Aunt Eliz, while all agree.

"Banzai!" I holla, poking forth vacant dish. "Your digestion shall avoid this agony."

"What is?" all exclaim while leapting to their feetware.

"You should all be very thanksgiving," I snuggest. "You have been rescued from considerable preserved poison by one patriotic dog what sacrificed himself by eloping with Hon. Turkey before he could be ate."

"Kill the dishonest mammal!" all gollup with thankless expression.

"Why you should want I kill dog for stealing turkey you do not require?" I ask with Teddy Roosevelt voice. "He should be gave medal of Pilgrim 4 Fathers for eating a bird you would not dare to bite."

"Then you mean we shall have no turkey?" snagger all.

"You shall be spared that calamity," I say off.

"How lonesome Thanksgiving dinner seem without him!" mone Uncle Seth.

"How can we fill his vacant platter?" sobb Hon. Mrs. "I should be thankful for Hon. Turkey, however tough!"

Just while she say this—crashy! ! Loud sound of approaching dog heard from kitchen window, and Hon. Fido with waggish tail trott into dining-room, carrying that enormalous bird in his careful teeth. He lay that absent fowel reverently at my feets.

"Hon. Fido do not care for this enlarged chicken, so he bring him back," I report.

"Dinner are now spoilt!" decry Hon. Mrs.

"How could you speak it?" I research. "When turkey go, you say, 'Dinner ruined!' When he come back, you say, 'Dinner spoilt!' I am impossible to understand about American customs. You have Thanksgive dinner so you can set around making bewails. So foolish to do! Why you no choose this date for to kick out Misfortune?"

"I shall do so!" abrupt Hon. Goober, arising upwards. "First Misfortune to kick will be in your direction."

Next he rejected me through window by force

of Swedish jiu-jitsu. Hon. Fido arrive by next kick, and Hon. Turkey flew afterward, striking me on hair so earnestly he left me quite brainless. Hoping you are the same,

Yours truly,
HASHIMURA TOGO.

THE END